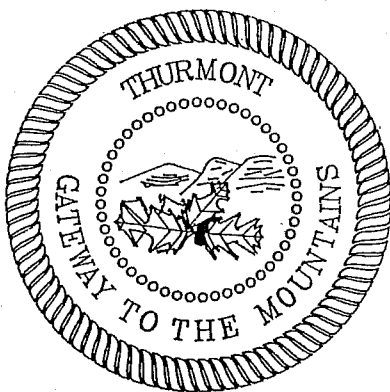


Thurmont Master Plan

Adopted

May 1998



Town of Thurmont
Frederick County, Maryland



THE COMMISSIONERS OF THURMONT

10 Frederick Road
P.O. Box 17
Thurmont, Maryland 21788
301-271-7313

RESOLUTION 98 - 1 RE: ADOPTION OF THE 1998 THURMONT MASTER PLAN OF THURMONT, MARYLAND


- WHEREAS, the Thurmont Planning Commission certified to the Board of Commissioners of Thurmont, Maryland, pursuant to Section 3.07 of Article 66B, of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1957), as amended, the Approved and Recommended Thurmont Master Plan to be considered by the Board of Commissioners of Thurmont, the local legislative body, and
- WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Thurmont conducted a public hearing on the Thurmont Master Plan recommended by the Thurmont Planning Commission on the 2nd day of March, 1998, in Thurmont pursuant to public notice duly given, and
- WHEREAS, subsequent to the public hearing, the Board of Commissioners of Thurmont considered all the recommendations of the Thurmont Planning Commission, the Planning Staff, those public comments received as part of the public hearings of the Planning Commission and before the Board of Commissioners of Thurmont, and also reviewed written correspondence which was submitted concerning the Plan by adjoining planning jurisdictions, affected State and local agencies and interested persons, and the Board of Commissioners of Thurmont conducted this review process in sessions open to the public, and
- WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Thurmont finds that this Plan is made in accordance with Section 3.06, of Article 66B, of the Annotated Code of Maryland with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing the coordinated and harmonious development of the Town of Thurmont, and which will, in accommodating present and future needs, promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the town and its citizens;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of Thurmont, Maryland, that the 1998 Thurmont Master Plan is hereby adopted, containing the text titled:

"THURMONT MASTER PLAN"

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Thurmont Master Plan Land Use Map and Zoning Map, at a scale of one inch equals four hundred feet (1" = 400') covering the town, is hereby approved and adopted by the Board of Commissioners of Thurmont pursuant to Section 3.08, of Article 66B, of the Annotated Code of Maryland

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THURMONT


Terrence R. Best, President

THURMONT MASTER PLAN

Town of Thurmont, Maryland

Adopted May 6, 1998

Commissioners of Thurmont

Terrence Best, President
Robert Wagerman
Edward Hobbs
Wayne Hooper
Eileen Waesche

Planning Commission

Glenn Muth, Chairman
Bruce Littell, Vice-Chairman
Eileen Waesche
Bryant Despeaux
Jerry Moore
Jim Madison, Alternate

Town Clerk/Treasurer

Richard May

Project Planner

James Gugel, AICP

Prepared by the
Frederick County Department of Planning and Zoning

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Planning Framework

Introduction

The purpose of a master plan is twofold. First a plan is an articulation of community values as identified by its citizens and the elected officials. These values are expressed through the goals and policies identified under each of the elements of the plan. Secondly, the plan provides guidance for decision making by Town officials when reviewing development plans, rezonings, annexations, or the planning for community facilities.

The Thurmont Master Plan looks at a 20-year time frame in considering the location, type, and amount of development. The Master Plan addresses several elements including the environment, land use, transportation, and community facilities. A second component of the Plan is a comprehensive rezoning process which allows individual property owners and the Town to initiate rezonings on a town wide basis. This helps to implement the land use plan by bringing the zoning in line with the land use designation.

This Draft Plan represents the second stage in the update process. The flowchart in Figure 1 shows the entire process. The Draft Plan will be presented at a public hearing before the Town Planning Commission for a recommendation to the Town Board of Commissioners.

County and State Plans

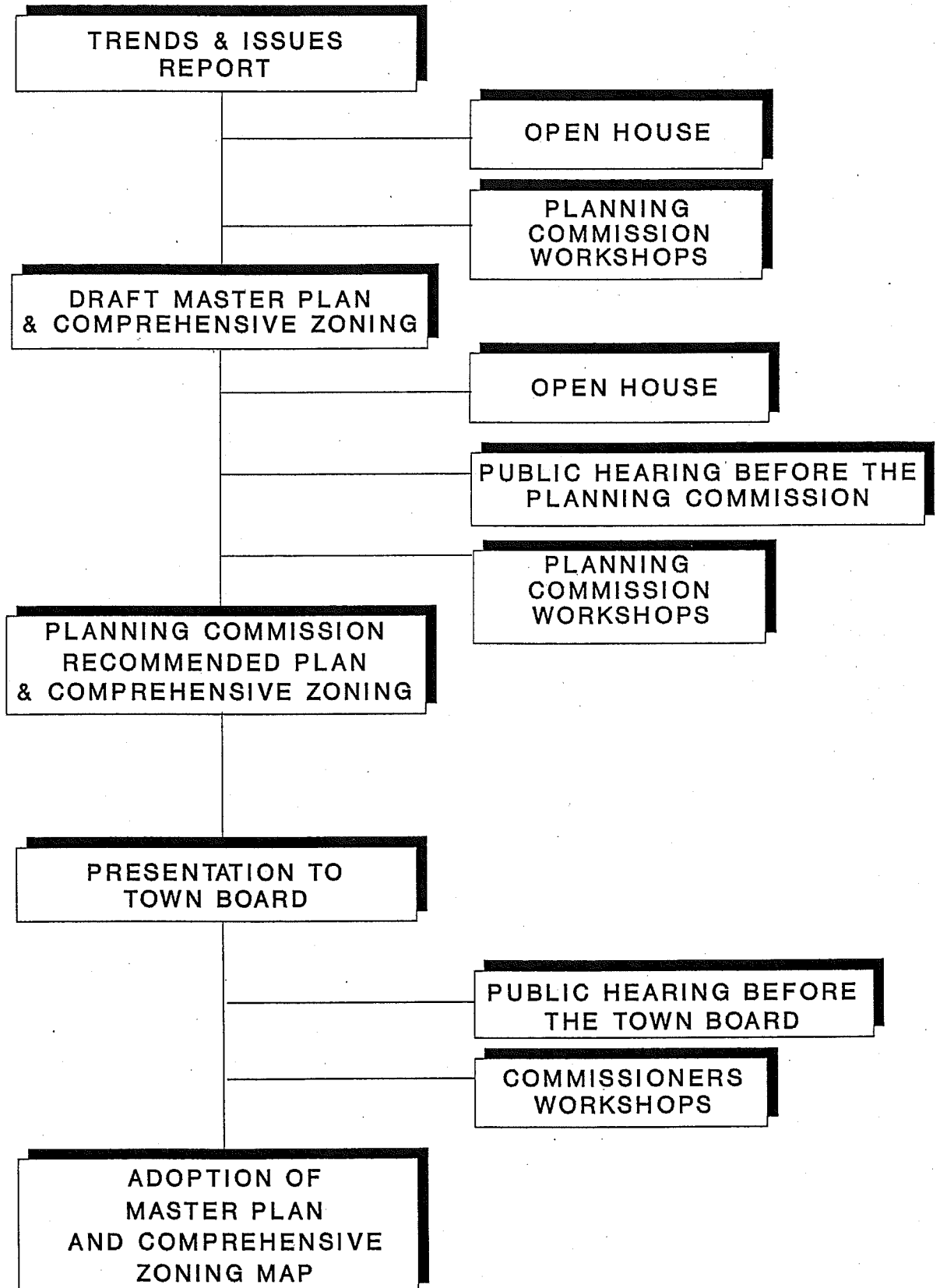
It is important when planning for a particular area to coordinate and be consistent with plans from adjoining jurisdictions. Around the Town of Thurmont are plans for the Thurmont Region which were prepared by the County and encompass the northern part of the County. At the next level is the Countywide Plan which establishes a framework for identifying growth areas throughout the County. The State has also taken an active role in providing guidance for growth at the local level.

The Maryland Planning Act of 1992

Part of the local planning process will involve incorporating the State goals into the local plans. The State of Maryland passed the Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 which seeks to provide statewide guidance for development in an effort to encourage economic

Figure 1

STEPS IN THURMONT MASTER PLAN UPDATE



growth, minimize sprawl development, and to protect the State's natural resources. The Planning Act has identified seven visions or goals that are required to be included in a local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. The visions are as follows:

1. Development is concentrated into suitable areas.
2. Environmentally sensitive areas are protected.
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected.
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption is practiced.
6. Economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.
7. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

The Planning Act also requires regular updates of a jurisdiction's master plan every six years. Also required is the preparation of a sensitive area element which documents the location of flood plains, steep slopes, and habitat of endangered plant and animal species.

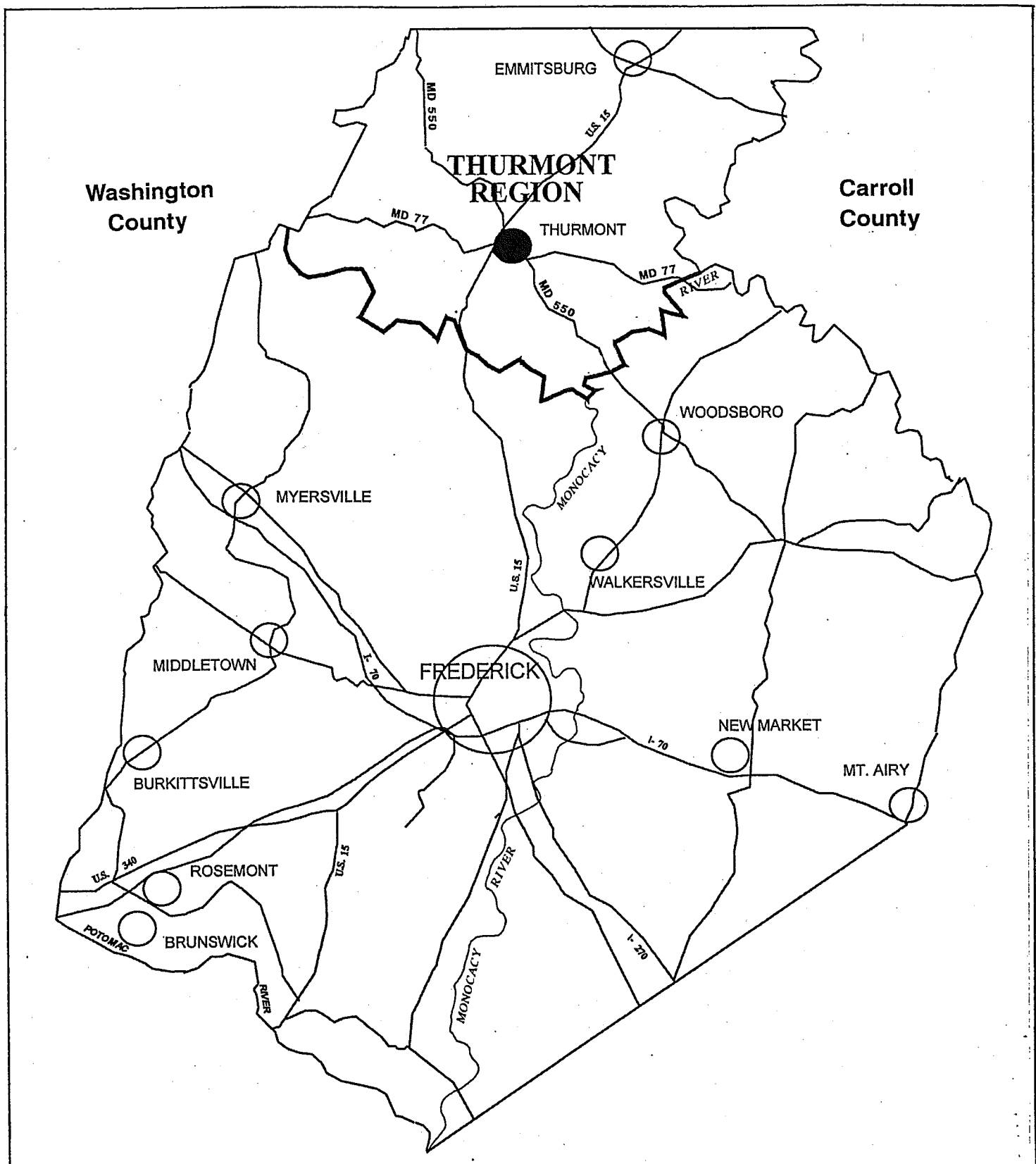
As a follow up to the Planning Act the State, in 1997, adopted the Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth legislation. The Smart Growth initiatives seek to focus new development into Priority Funding Areas (PFA) in an effort to preserve the rural lands and to maximize the use of public funds for infrastructure improvements. The State would focus its funding for schools, water and sewer, and roads to the PFA's that would be designated within each county.

Countywide Comprehensive Plan



In the 1972 Countywide Comprehensive Plan the Community Concept was introduced in an effort to identify appropriate growth areas throughout the county. This concept was refined in the 1984 and 1990 Countywide Comprehensive Plan updates.

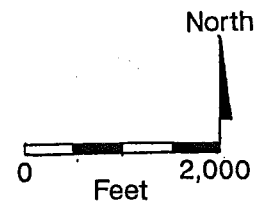
The Community Concept seeks to focus residential, commercial and industrial development into compact growth areas in an effort to minimize suburban sprawl. These growth areas include most of the municipalities in the County. Through the community concept, communities will be able to continue to function as the focal point for social and commercial activity. Even as new growth occurs, the Community Concept is meant to strengthen the sense of place for both old and new residents. The Community Concept identifies a hierarchy of communities which are defined by the planned population size, the level of community facilities, and the type and density of residential, commercial, and industrial development. Traditionally these communities have functioned as the cultural and social focal points for the County. The Community Concept seeks to maintain and strengthen these roles by supporting the improvement and construction of community facilities in these communities and by focusing new development in them to maximize the efficiency of the facilities.

Within each of the County's eight planning regions, a hierarchy of communities is identified. This hierarchy is composed of three levels: Regional, District and Rural communities. The Regional community is the generally the largest community and would continue to be the primary growth area and have the highest level of community facilities. A region may have one or more District communities which are anticipated to receive growth but at levels lower than in a regional



Regional Map

 Planning Regions
 Municipalities
Thurmont Master Plan



community. The Rural Communities are typically centered around old crossroads and are expected to see only small amounts of infill development.

Thurmont Region Plan

Implementation of the community concept is addressed within each of the eight regional plans that comprise the County. The Thurmont Region Plan, adopted in October 1995, designates Thurmont as the Regional Community, Emmitsburg as the District Community, and Graceham as one of seven Rural Communities.

Historically, Thurmont has always been the largest community in the Thurmont Region and has along with Emmitsburg accommodated most of the new development that has occurred in the Region. Since 1990, 85% of the new residential dwellings constructed in the Region have been located in either Thurmont or Emmitsburg. Thurmont also has the community facilities including a middle and high school and a branch library.

Thurmont History

The Thurmont area was first settled in the late 1700's by German immigrants who found the forests, fertile soil, and plentiful water to be the ideal characteristics for a community. The village center was laid out around 1803 by the Creager family around the intersection of the main north-south(MD 806) and east-west(MD 77) routes. The Wellers, a German immigrant family, were also influential in the early development of the village which became known as Mechanicstown due to the number of blacksmiths and mechanics who worked in the area. Mechanicstown supported a number of industries including an edge tool factory, a woolen mill, tanneries and a match factory. Mechanicstown was incorporated as a municipality in 1832.

In 1871, the Western Maryland Railroad came to town and with it a new infusion of industries and development. These new industries included a cannery, a weaving factory and cigar manufacturing. The railroad also brought summer visitors from Baltimore who stayed at the several hotels built in town, the earliest of which dates to 1813. In 1894, the name Mechanicstown was officially changed to Thurmont which is a German phrase for "through the mountains." This was done in response to concerns by the railroad that the name was too long. Another influence on Thurmont was the construction of the Hagerstown and Frederick Railroad (H&F) which connected Thurmont with Frederick beginning in 1908. The H & F operated with electric trolleys to provide both passenger and freight service until 1958.

Since the 1950's, Thurmont has become less of an agricultural center and more of a service provider for the northern part of the County. The Town still supports several major industries, while the tourism has also boosted the local economy due to Thurmont's proximity to parks in the Catocin Mountains.

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Existing Conditions & Trends

Population Growth

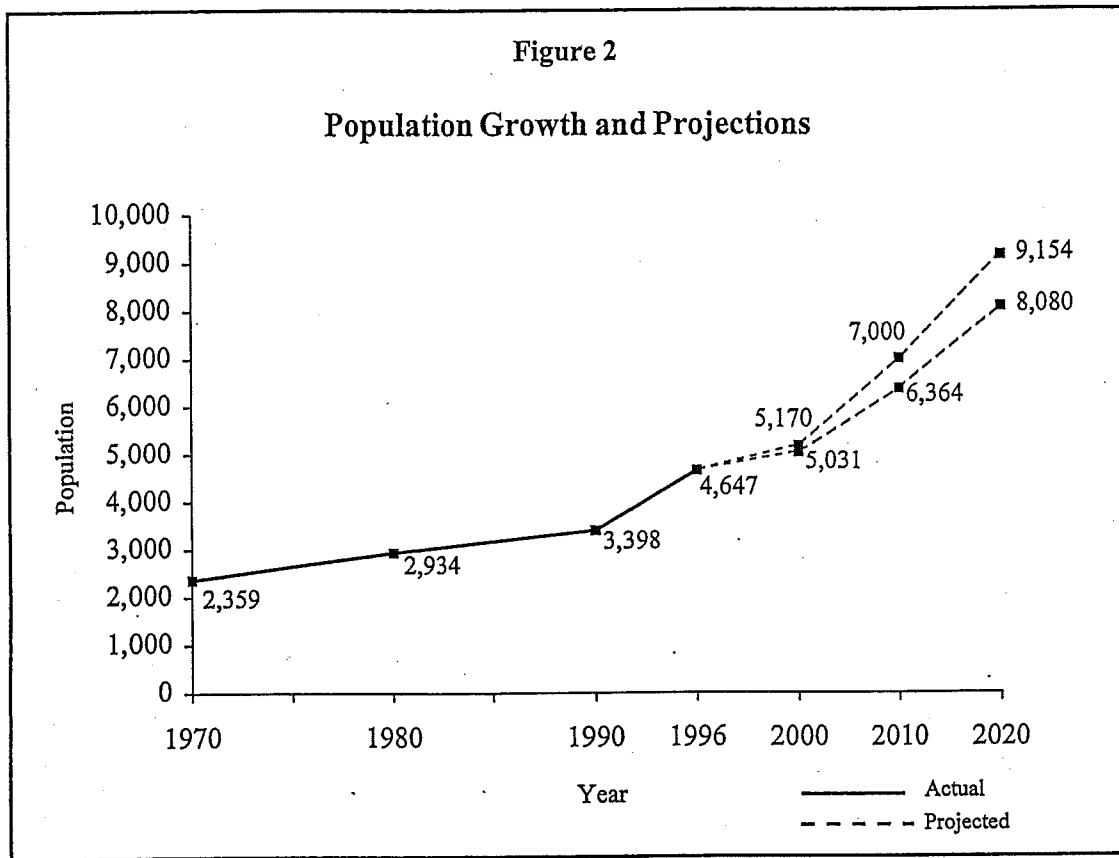
Since 1980, the rate of population growth has increased, especially since 1990 when the annual growth rate had tripled from the previous five year time period. Looking at the entire period from 1980 to 1995, the total population of Thurmont increased by 51.5% with an average annual increase of 3.2%. This increase is close to the 53.1% rise in the County's population during the same period and is significantly greater than the 16% population increase for the Thurmont Region.

Table 1

Thurmont Population Growth Rates

	Population Increase	Total Percent Increase	Average Annual Percent Increase
1980 - 1984	180	6.1%	1.2%
1985 - 1989	283	9.1%	1.8%
1990 - 1994	1,049	30.9%	6.2%

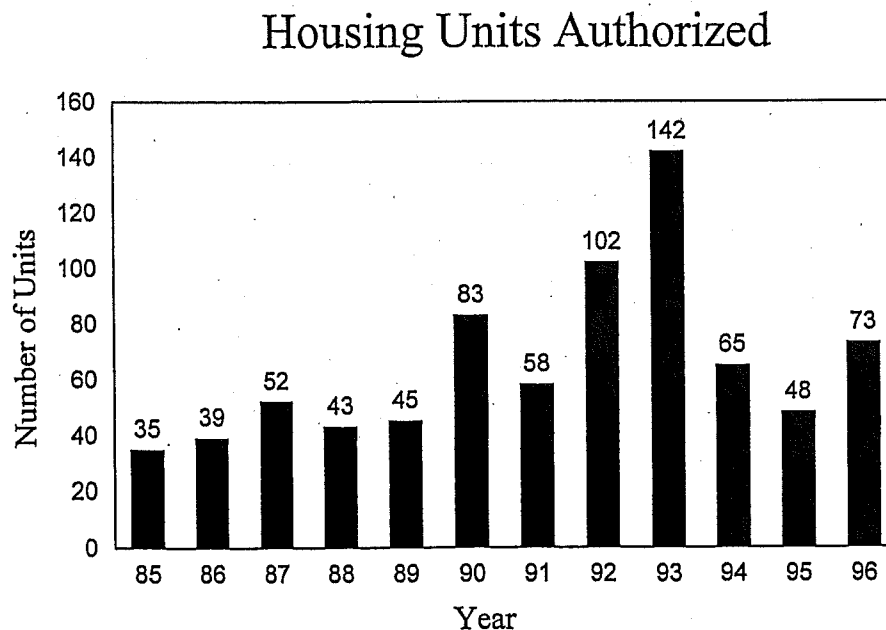
The growth rate experienced between 1990 and 1994 is not expected to continue into the foreseeable future. The increase during this period was due to a significant peak in housing construction during 1992 and 1993 which is not expected to continue. During 1994 and 1995 the average annual growth rate was 3.3%. This rate is more indicative of how much the Town will grow over the long term. For developing population projections two growth rates have been used to develop the graph shown in Figure 2. The higher line is based on an annual rate of 3.2% which is consistent with the long term trend since 1980. A second rate of 2.5% is represented by the lower line which assumes a moderating of the growth rate.



Development Activity

From 1984 to 1989, there was an average of 44 new dwellings/year constructed in Thurmont. Since 1990, this average has almost doubled to 81 dwellings/year. However, this increase is due to very high peaks in 1992 and 1993 which are not indicative of a long term trend (see Figure 3). In fact, there has been an equally significant decline in housing construction experienced in 1994 and 1995 which is more indicative of a building level that will be sustainable for the next ten to twenty years. However, there may still be short term peaks in building activity.

Figure 3

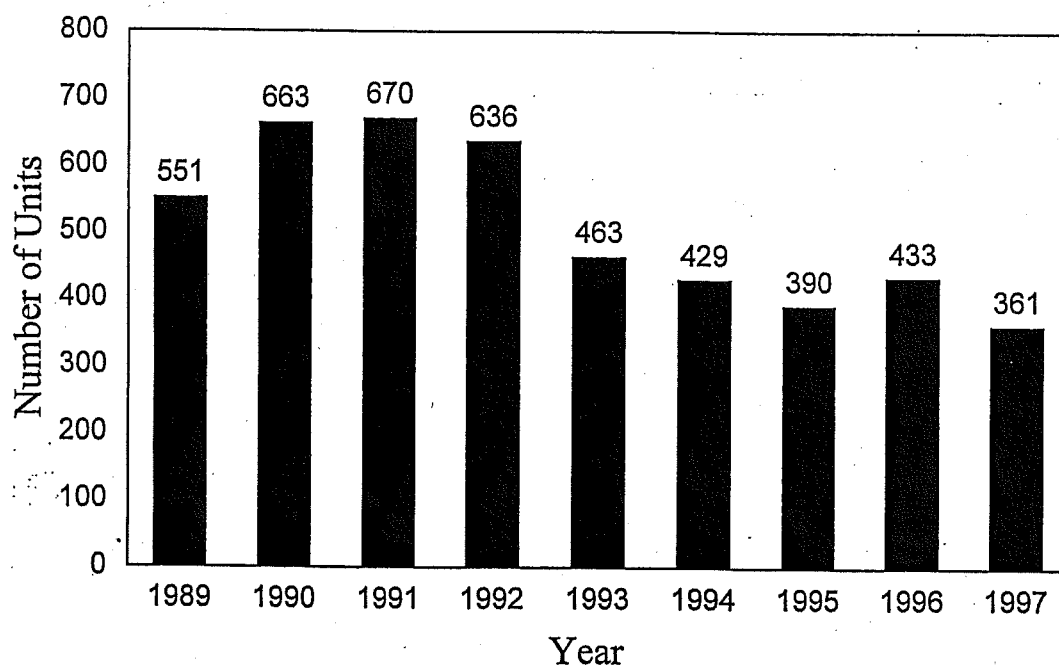


Residential

Since 1989, there have been nine to 13 subdivisions under development in Thurmont at any given time. The potential number of lots/dwelling units in these subdivisions is referred to as the pipeline development which is shown in Figure 4. The overall trend has been a gradual decline in the pipeline development as a result of fewer new subdivisions being proposed. The adoption of the APFO will keep any new subdivisions from being approved until the elementary school capacity increases which may not occur until 2002. Since 1988 the housing composition has changed with an increase in the construction of townhouses. At that time the composition of existing housing in Thurmont was 68% single-family, 6% townhouses, and 26% apartments. Within the 12 subdivisions currently under construction there is a total of 611 units proposed which consist of 67% single-family, 17% townhouses, and 16% apartments/condominiums. Of the 611 total units, 361 remain unbuilt as of January 1, 1997.

Figure 4

Residential Development in the Pipeline



Commercial

While a majority of the new development in Thurmont has been residential there have also been a number of commercial and industrial projects developed since 1988. Most of the commercial activity has taken place around the US 15/MD 806 interchange at the southern end of town. Construction has included the Orchard Village shopping center, a motel, three fast food restaurants, and the expansion of several existing businesses. Downtown Thurmont has seen the construction of new professional offices and expansion of the health center and overall has maintained itself as a healthy and viable commercial area as evidenced by the lack of any significant vacancies.

Industrial

Industrial activity has been limited to expansions of existing uses including NVR Homes, Thurmont Co-op, and Moore Business Forms. The Hoke Furniture Co. property has been redeveloped into a small industrial park with several businesses. The most significant development has been the purchase of the Claire Frock building by Structural Systems a manufacturer of structural building components.

Rezoning and Annexations

In July 1990, the Town instituted a moratorium on residential annexations for properties greater than two acres in size. This moratorium was an effort to focus new residential development to vacant land already within the Town limits. The moratorium was lifted in July 1995 in anticipation that an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance would be adopted. Since 1988 81.7 acres have been annexed into Thurmont. A majority of the annexations, 72.6 acres, were zoned to residential categories. The remaining 9.3 acres were annexed as Agriculture.

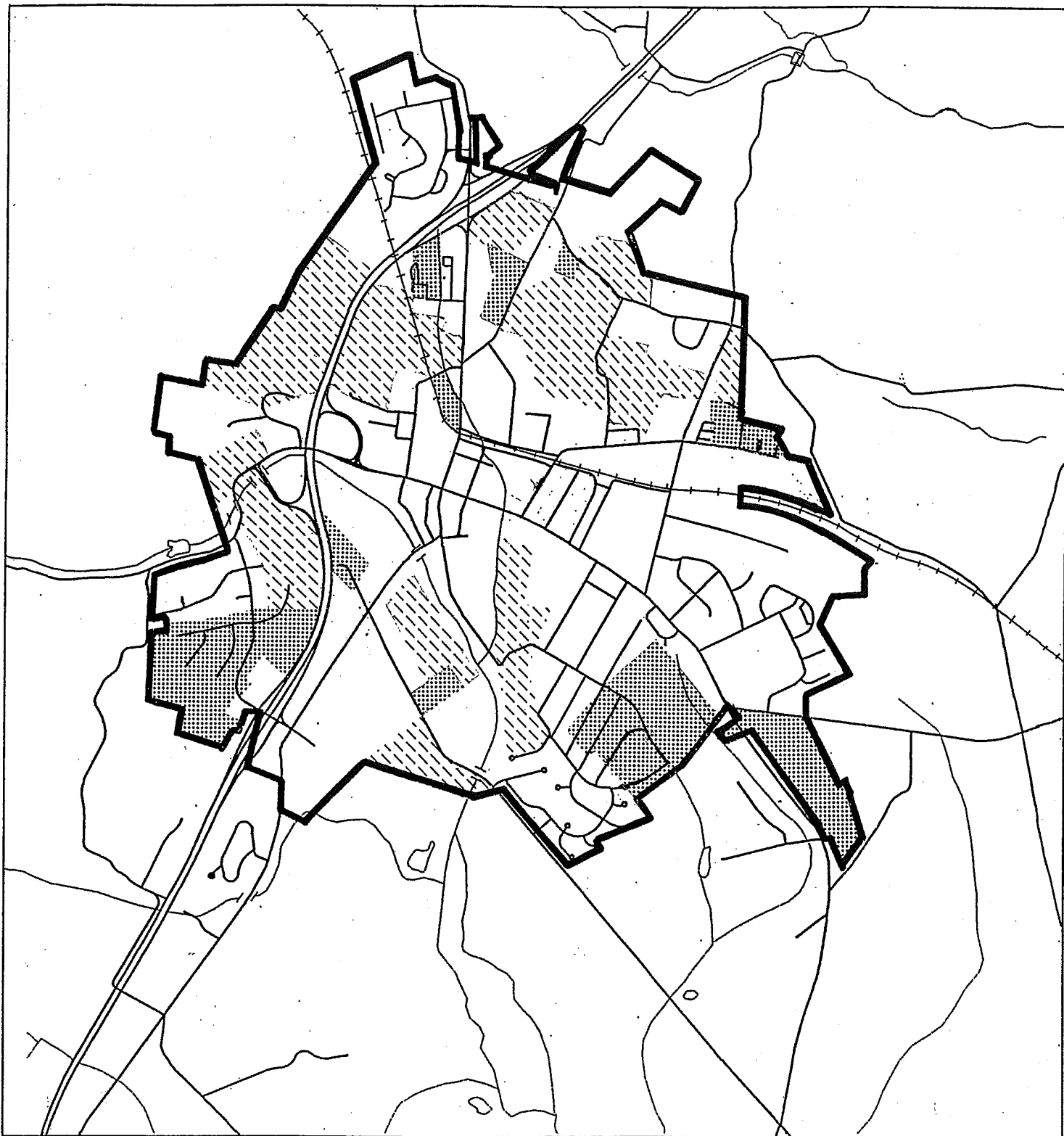
Since 1988 ten rezonings were approved by the Town totaling 30 acres. Of this amount 26 acres were converted to residential with the remainder zoned to either commercial or industrial zoning districts.

Residential Development Potential



Despite the fact that there have not been many annexations to the Town, there is still a significant amount of residential development potential within the current Town limits. There are two categories which provide the existing residential development potential in the Town. The total build out potential of the Master Plan would also include land within the annexation areas which will be described in the Land Use chapter. A summary of the development potential is provided in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 does include vacant commercial and industrial land as well.

Pipeline Development - This category includes subdivisions that are approved and in most cases under construction. Currently there is a total of 12 approved subdivisions with five or more lots with a potential for 361 units/dwellings.

Vacant Land - Vacant land includes those properties that do not have any approved development plans. Thurmont still has a number of properties that are zoned Agriculture and would need to go through the rezoning process before having any development plans reviewed and approved. Table 2 below shows the amount of vacant land by zoning district and the development potential for the residential acreage.



Existing Residential Development Potential

-  Pipeline Development
-  Vacant Land

Thurmont Master Plan

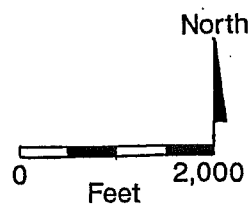


Table 2

Vacant Land Inventory

Zoning District	Acres	Potential Dwellings
A-1 Agriculture	94	466
R-1 Low Density Res.	145	368
R-2 Medium Density Res.	63	240
B-1 Highway Service	8	
B-2 Town Business	38(1)	
I-1 Industrial	51	
TOTAL	399 acres	1,074 dwellings

(1) Includes 13 acres with site plan approval for Catocin Plaza Shopping Center

Table 3

Residential Potential Within Current Town Limits (3)

	a	b	c	d	
	Existing(1)	Pipeline Develop.	Vacant Land	Total Develop. Potential b + c	Total a + d
Acres	688	214	302	516 ac.	1,459 ac.
Dwelling Units	1,961	361	1,074	1,435 du's	3,396 du's
Population(2)	4,753	913	2,717	3,630	8,383

(1) As of January 1, 1996

(2) Based on a household size of 2.53 persons/household

(3) This is the potential build out of land within the current Town limits and does not include any annexation areas.

Community Character

A Vision of Thurmont

An important element of a plan is the identification of a vision for the community which would provide a framework for decision making. The goals and policy statements identified in the individual elements of this Plan would also reflect the desired vision.

A survey was distributed to all Town residents as part of the Trends and Issues stage of the Master Plan update. One question on the survey asked to identify the Town's biggest strengths/assets. By far the common response mentioned was the small community / small town character of Thurmont. A second question asked residents to describe their vision of Thurmont in the year 2015 which is the target for this Plan. The most often mentioned vision desired by the respondents was the desire to maintain Thurmont's small town character and atmosphere. With ever greater development pressures many small towns have taken on the look of the new "suburban" development rather than having the development follow the patterns and characteristics of the town.

In 2015 Thurmont will still retain its small town character. Thurmont will support a range of residential uses as well as commercial and employment uses. Thurmont will be a larger community in terms of population and its geographic size. All healthy communities must grow to provide opportunities for people of all income ranges to live in a small town, to be able to work where they live, and to have the amenities and public facilities to support a growing community.

New residential development will follow traditional neighborhood design principals and blend in with older residential areas. A mix of housing types will be available to accommodate residents of all income levels. The densities of new housing should be high enough to efficiently use the vacant land available within the Town, which would minimize the need to develop land around the periphery of Thurmont and to reduce the need for costly expansion of the infrastructure. These residential areas are served by community and neighborhood parks that are within walking distance of a majority of the homes.

Downtown Thurmont will be the physical focal point for the community. Commercial businesses and offices will continue to thrive and public uses such as the library and town office will be relocated into larger facilities that also would provide a civic presence.

Thurmont will provide opportunities for employment to allow people to work and live in the same community.

Characteristics of a Traditional Town

Much of what defines a small town and what people relate to can be attributed to the physical aspects of a community. Examples of the classic small town all share a number of characteristics that can be applied to the design of new development in an effort to maintain the small town character and atmosphere. The following list is taken from the book Rural by Design: Maintaining Small Town Character, Randall Arendt, 1994.

- compactness and tighter form
- medium density (somewhere in between that of cities and sprawling postwar suburbs)
- "downtown" centers with street-edge buildings, mixed uses, gathering places, public building, parks, and other open spaces
- commercial premises meeting everyday needs (grocery, a newsagent, drugstore, hardware, etc.)
- residential neighborhoods close to the town center, sometimes with house lots abutting commercial promises
- civic open spaces within, and rural open space at edges
- pedestrian-friendly but also auto-accessible
- streets scaled for typical uses (rather than being oversized and over engineered to accommodate "worst-case scenarios")
- incremental growth outward from the core

Thurmont already exhibits many of these attributes in the older parts of town. The key involves preserving the characteristics that Thurmont has and encouraging new development to incorporate the use of the same characteristics.

The Maryland Office of Planning has prepared a report, *Design Characteristics of Maryland's Traditional Settlements*, which describes traditional neighborhood design guidelines based on surveys of several towns and neighborhoods in Maryland. The features described below elaborate on many of the characteristics identified by Arendt.

Land Use

The most important characteristic regarding land use is providing for a mix of housing types and bringing residential and businesses in close proximity to each other. Also common among the traditional communities is having residential apartments above shops or offices. The State's report also describes the "continuity of scale" as a common element of the communities. This characteristic refers to the fact that commercial structures are typically consistent in size with residential structures. Only public buildings such as churches are built at appropriately larger scales.

Open Space

Many communities have some hierarchy of open space which provide a physical, visual, or social connection with the community. In Thurmont, the "Square Corner" which is used to describe the intersection of Main Street and Church Street functions as the physical center of downtown.

Memorial Park and the carnival grounds also provide a physical and social sense of identity. Typically in new residential subdivisions, the open space is relegated to left over spaces around the periphery of the development's floodplain or around stormwater management ponds and do not provide a functional open space for the residents. These spaces should be located in the geographic center of a development to provide equal access and provide a stronger physical and visual focal point. In situations where a new development is constructed adjoining older neighborhoods the open space should be located where the two developments adjoin.

Streets

The street has always played an important role as part of the public realm. In addition to providing automobile access, streets and their adjoining sidewalks provide pedestrian access and opportunities for social interaction. A community's Main Street provides a central focus much like a town square or park.

A grid network maximizes accessibility in a neighborhood so that no single street is overloaded with traffic. The accessibility that a grid network provides for the automobile is also critical for pedestrians because it provides human scaled blocks with mostly straight streets that reduces the perception of distance. A grid network which provides more opportunity for interaction among neighbors is practically the antithesis of the cul-de-sac which can be described as being anti-social and exclusionary.

Other factors that contribute to the character of the street include the setback of buildings from the street and the orientation of the buildings and sidewalk design. Traditional neighborhood design is characterized by buildings, whether they be residences or shops, that face the street and are relatively close to the sidewalk. Bringing the buildings closer to the street creates a more intimate scale along the corridor. Even at sites where off-street parking is available every effort should be made to orient the front of the building to the street and not to the parking lot. Sidewalks that provide safe and comfortable pedestrian access are necessary to encourage walking for both recreation and for shopping, running errands, etc.

Visual Character and Identity

There are several elements that contribute to preserving the unique features that gives a community its identity. Almost all traditional communities have an "edge" which provides a clear demarcation between the development in the community and the surrounding countryside. Lower density sprawl development around the municipal boundary should be avoided in an effort to protect the visual character of the town.

The second element addresses common architectural features found on either residences or commercial buildings. While it is not necessary to require that new construction be exact duplicates of older structures located in the community, however, features such as front porches, trim, windows and roofing material could be incorporated into current designs so that new construction would have some "visual coherence" with older neighborhoods in the community. One of the most prominent features of current architecture is the garage which often extends beyond the front of the house and completely dominates the streetscape. Setting an attached garage back even one

to two feet from the face of the house can have a significant visual impact on the streetscape.

Design Guidelines

Described below are design guidelines that should be considered by developers and the Planning Commission for the design and review of new developments. The purpose of these guidelines is to enable new development to be better integrated with the existing neighborhoods and street patterns. The guidelines follow what has been commonly referred to as neo-traditional design which is based on the design characteristics and patterns that were used in pre World War II developments.

While the guidelines address the physical layout and characteristics of a development, they can also have an effect on the social aspects of the residents.

Downtown Development

1. New buildings should be located at the back of the sidewalk in line with buildings on adjoining properties. The front door should be oriented to the street and not to any parking lots to the side or the rear of the building.
2. If parking is provided it should be located on the side or the rear of the building.
3. While an exact replication of 19th century architecture is not necessary, new structures should be consistent in scale, materials, with some architectural detail similar to the existing 19th century structures in the downtown.
4. Signage should be in proper proportion with the building. Internal illuminated signs should be discouraged.

Residential Development

1. If several different dwelling types are proposed they should be integrated throughout the property and not have all of the townhouses or duplexes concentrated in one corner apart from the single-family dwellings.
2. The street layout should follow a grid pattern where topography allows. Multiple connects should be provided to existing streets to better integrate existing neighborhoods with the new development and to help spread the traffic among several streets. Cul-de-sacs should be discouraged.
3. The streets should be divided into blocks no longer than 300-400 feet. This would help encourage more pedestrian activity by keeping the blocks at a human scale which reduces the perceived distance along a particular length of a street.
4. A neighborhood park should be provided to serve 150-200 houses. The parks should be placed in central location to provide easy walk access to the entire neighborhood. They should be 20,000-40,000 sq. ft. in size to accommodate a playground area and an informal playing field. These parks would provide an important physical focal point for the neighborhood that would also promote more social interaction.

5. Front yard setbacks should be kept to a minimum in order to provide a larger, more usable rear yards and to better define the street corridor. A "build to" line which establishes a maximum setback could be used.
6. The backyards of townhouses should not face directly onto a public street. The parking should be placed in the rear. Apartments should also be placed along the street with parking on the side or in the rear of the property.
7. On street parking should be encouraged for apartments and townhouses which helps reduce excessive paving for parking lots and also helps to slow traffic on the streets. For townhouse and apartment developments only the minimum required parking should be off street while visitor parking should be provided by on street spaces.

Commercial Development

1. The parking should be located to the side and/or rear of the building. The building should be placed as close to the street as possible with the front door facing the street.
2. Pedestrian access from the sidewalk to the building should be provided that is both safe and comfortable.
3. Where permitted, on street parking should be encouraged.
4. Signage should be appropriate to the scale of the building and compatible with the character of the Town. Low monument signs and signs attached to the building shall be encouraged.
5. Consideration should be given to having residential uses on the second floor of commercial/office buildings.

Historic Preservation

In 1991 the County conducted an inventory of historic sites in the Thurmont Region as part of a larger effort to inventory sites throughout the County. The Thurmont Survey District was identified based on the pre-1947 boundary of the Town. The survey district is bounded by US 15 to the west, the intersection of Thurmont Blvd. and Frederick Rd. to the south, Apples Church Rd. to the east, Boundary Ave. to the north, and the intersection of US 15 and MD 550 to the northwest.

The inventory describes the architectural and historical significance of the residential, commercial, and industrial buildings and sites within the survey district. Brief descriptions are provided for several individual buildings. The survey report notes that a high number of modern infill developments have occurred which has affected the historical character of the district. However, it should be noted that a historic district covering the "downtown" area of Thurmont or certainly individual buildings would be eligible for designation on the National Register of Historic Places. Over the years Thurmont has lost a number of significant structures, such as the Western Maryland Railroad Station, that contribute to the history and the identity of the Town. Individual buildings such as the railroad station, or areas such as the downtown contribute to the sense of place that makes Thurmont unique. In addition to helping to preserve the Town's character, historic preservation efforts can also help support tourism and its resulting economic benefits.

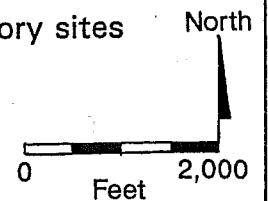


Thurmont Survey District

--- District Boundary

Based on the pre-1947 boundary of the Town for an inventory of history sites conducted in 1991.

Thurmont Master Plan



There are several alternatives for addressing historic preservation in a community. This Plan does not advocate any particular alternative but presents them for future discussion by the town officials and the community.

Status Quo

Currently, the Town does not have any policies regarding historic preservation. This creates a reactionary approach to proposals to modify or demolish a historic structure. Efforts to address historic preservation issues would continue to be handled on a case by case basis.

Expanded Inventory and Guidelines

This alternative would involve expanding on the inventory work that had been done by the County to determine the extent of the existing historic resources. A set of voluntary guidelines would be developed that would address modifications to structures and perhaps how to curb cases of demolition by neglect. This effort would also help to raise an awareness of historic preservation the resulting benefits to the community.

National Register of Historic Places

This federal designation could be applied to individual sites or a historic district. Emmitsburg has recently designated its downtown area as a historic district. This designation provides recognition that can lead to preservation efforts; protects the district from adverse impacts from federal and state-funded projects; and allow property owners to be eligible for tax benefits and loans for preservation work. This designation does not impose any restrictions on maintenance, alterations, or demolition of a structure and does not require any local government ordinances or administration.

Maryland Register of Historic Properties

The State of Maryland allows for the designation of districts or individual sites though they must be eligible for placement on the National Register. The same characteristics as described for a federal designation with regards to protection from state-funded projects and the lack of restrictions on work done to a property also apply to a state designated site.

Local Historic District

This alternative would require the greatest level of involvement by the Town government and would provide a high level of control and protection of sites within the designated district. The establishment of a local district does not require that they also be listed in the Federal or Maryland Registers. A local district would require development of an ordinance that would regulate alterations to existing structures and the development of new structures. A historic district commission, comprising appointed citizens, is typically formed to administer the ordinance. The commission would have the authority to approve any kind of alteration to an existing structure, signage, and the review of new structures. Within Frederick County three municipalities have established local historic districts: Frederick City, New Market, and Burkittsville.

Goals

- Promote new development and reuse of existing structures which help in achieving the vision of Thurmont as a small town.
- Maintain and enhance the architectural character of the downtown.
- Recognize and protect the historic sites in Thurmont.

Policies

- Support the construction of new development which respects the historic pattern of the older residential and commercial areas.
- Developers are encouraged to follow the design guidelines described in this Plan.
- To encourage the protection and restoration of existing structures in order to maintain the character of the downtown.

Environment - Sensitive Areas

Sensitive Areas

While there are not vast areas of open space within the town limits to consider for resource protection, there are a number of individual features that warrant protection from proposed development. The basis for identifying these features and the means to protect them comes from the Sensitive Areas element requirement of Maryland's Planning Act of 1992. The following features will be identified:

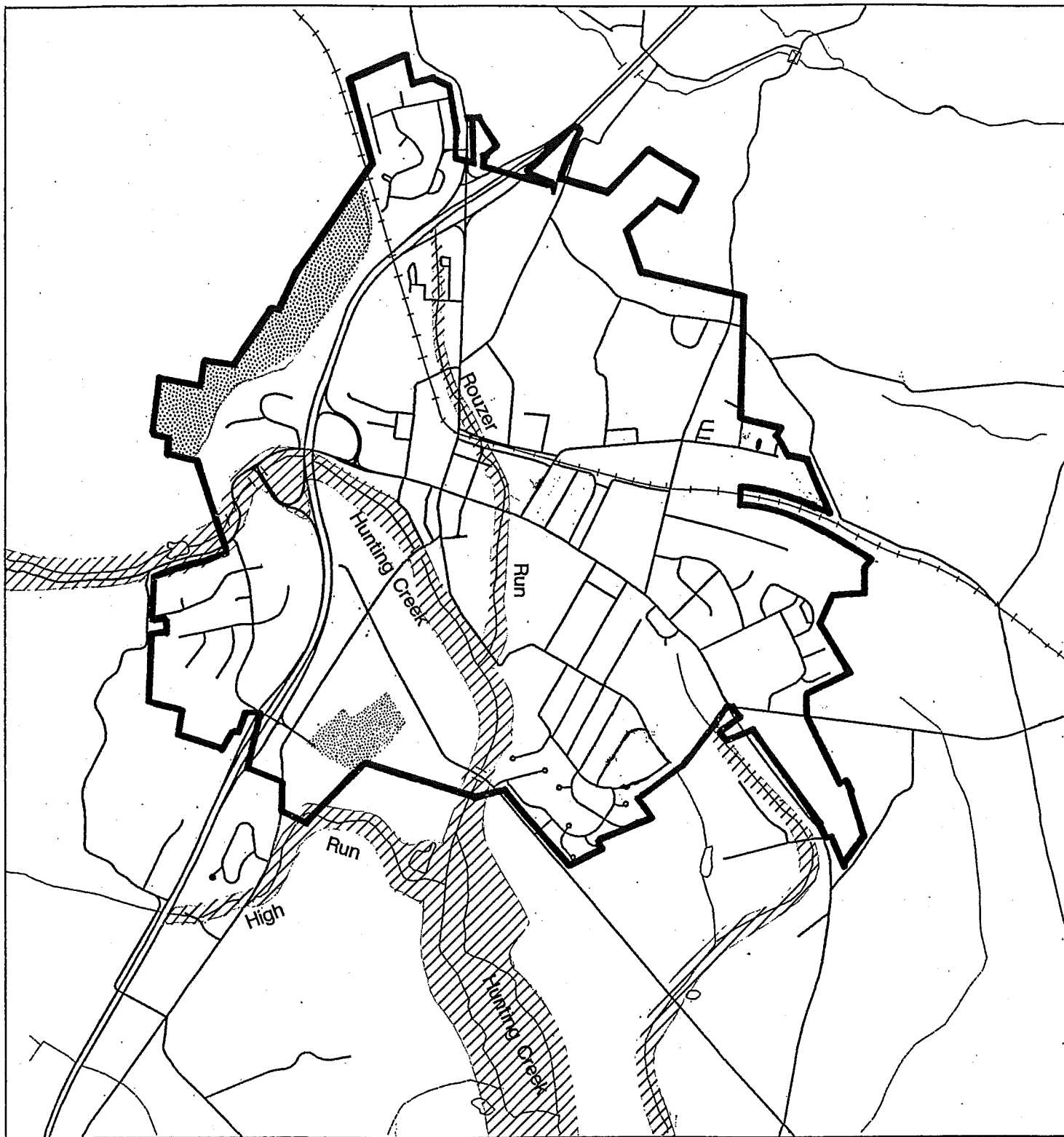
- streams and their buffers
- 100 year floodplain
- habitats of threatened and endangered species
- steep slopes

Streams and their Buffers

Protecting the buffer of a stream provides numerous benefits. The buffers themselves which may include forested areas provide habitats for many plant and animal species. Trees that provide shade over the water also help to moderate the temperature of the water which helps the aquatic life in the stream especially trout. Buffers also protect the stream and the water quality. Adjacent forest areas filter runoff from nearby development, provide shade to cool the water, and help to stabilize the bank to prevent erosion. All of these elements help to improve water quality well downstream ultimately including the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Buffers should include adjoining forest areas, wetlands, and steep slopes to provide maximum protection of the stream.

The management of stream buffers could involve the placement of protective easements when land that includes buffer areas go through either a subdivision or site plan review. With an easement the land would still be under private ownership. Another option would involve the transfer of land within the buffer to the Town where the buffer could be incorporated into the larger open space network. The overall goal of these strategies is to protect the buffers in a natural state.

There are four streams within or adjacent to the Town that would warrant protection from proposed development. The largest is Hunting Creek which originates in the Catocin Mountains and still has stretches of existing forest along its banks in addition to vacant land and some development. Rouzer Run has its headwaters within the town limits and is a tributary of Hunting Creek. While most of the land adjoining the creek is developed there may still be opportunities to provide



Sensitive Areas



100 Year Floodplain / Stream Buffer

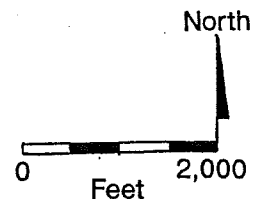


Steep Slopes



Wetlands

Thurmont Master Plan



most of the land adjoining the creek is developed there may still be opportunities to provide protective measures. The third stream is High Run, which originates in the Catoctin Mountains, is a tributary of Hunting Creek and is located just south of town. The last stream is an unnamed tributary of Hunting Creek and originates in the vicinity of the East End Park. All of these streams are classified as Class IV streams which are classified as Recreational Trout Waters.

100 Year Floodplain

All of the streams mentioned above have all or a portion of their length within the 100-year floodplain delineation. This delineation shows the area that would expect to be flooded, on average, once every 100 years. The purpose of identifying these floodplain areas is to protect life and property from potential flood damage. Prohibiting development within the 100-year floodplain also supports the protection of the stream buffers.

The northern portion of Rouzer Run and the western portion of High Run do not have any 100-year floodplain delineated on the FEMA maps. In Thurmont the 100-year floodplain is protected from development through the application of Open Space zoning or the floodplain regulations.

Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species

Since Thurmont was first settled there have remained few undisturbed areas within the town limits. The most likely area that would provide habitats for threatened plant or animal species is the land along Hunting Creek which still retains much of the forest buffer along the stream bank. The other potential area would be in the western portion of town along the border with Catoctin Mountain Park. The State's Natural Heritage Program would be responsible for identifying any habitat areas in Thurmont that should be protected.

Steep Slopes and Soils

The development of steep slopes, which will be defined as 25% or greater, can have a number of adverse impacts that should be avoided. The obvious impact is the increase in soil erosion from the removal of vegetation. This problem is even more serious when the slope is adjacent to a stream. Areas with steep slopes of 25% or greater are primarily located on the west side of US 15 along the foothills of the Catoctin Mountains. This area, between MD 77 and the railroad tracks, is composed of Highfield and Rough stony land soils which are characterized by moderate to severe erosion due primarily to the steep slopes. These soils also have severe restrictions for building site development.

Wetlands

There has been some identification of wetlands in the area behind the truck stop and along the proposed extension of Thurmont Blvd. Due to this delineation the area has been designated as a sensitive area. This is not an indication that this is the only wetlands in Thurmont. Other areas may be delineated as part of proposals for site plans or subdivisions. Typically most of the wetland areas would be located along streams within the 100 year floodplain and would be protected through the floodplain regulations.

Groundwater Resources

Thurmont derives all of its drinking water from five wells. Four of the wells are located within the current town limits and a fifth is located just outside the town limits at the corner of Roddy Rd. and

Apples Church Rd. All of the wells are located in the Hydrologic Unit I which describe the most productive aquifers with a range of one to about 580 gallons per minute (gpm). The wells range in depth from 105 ft to 294 ft. and have yields from 160 to 830 gpm. One reservoir located to the west of Thurmont along High Run is now fed by wells. A second reservoir is still fed by High Run and several springs and is used only for emergencies.

In May 1995 the Maryland Department of the Environment developed a wellhead protection plan for Thurmont. The plan provided mapping of wellhead protection areas; identified potential contaminant sources within the areas; and made recommendations for management of the wellhead areas.

Mineral Resources

The eastern part of Thurmont is underlain by the Gettysburg Shale geologic formation which is composed of soft red shale and sandstone. This area includes some alluvial mountain wash which is a gravel material that would have washed down along the streams and ravines from the Catoctin Mountains. Through the middle and western parts of Thurmont the geology includes Frederick Limestone and Harpers Phyllite. Portions of this area also include the alluvial mountain wash.

There is no mining activity nor any known commercial mineral resources in the vicinity of Thurmont.

Goals

- To protect the Town's natural and environmentally sensitive resources.
- Protect the quality of the air, water, and land from the adverse effects of development and growth.

Policies

- Development should not adversely affect the sensitive areas.
- Natural features should be used to establish the maximum expansion limits for the Town.
- Streams within the Town limit which do not have any 100-year floodplain should have a 50-ft buffer on each side of the stream within which structures, parking, and other improvements would be prohibited.
- Disburbance to natural vegetation within stream buffers including tree removal, shrub removal, clearing, burning, or grubbing shall not be permitted.
- The development or disturbance of streams or stream buffers for stormwater management shall not be permitted.
- Reforestation, required by the Forest Resource Ordinance, which cannot be handled on site should be located along streams in the Town.

Land Use

Historically Thurmont has always been the focus for development in the northern part of the County. Its central location within the Thurmont Region and its proximity to major highways such as US 15 has contributed to Thurmont's role as a regional community. This role has been reaffirmed in the 1995 Thurmont Region Plan which maintains Thurmont as the Regional Community.

As a Regional Community Thurmont would continue to accommodate higher levels of development than would occur in the smaller communities such as Graceham, Rocky Ridge, or even Emmitsburg. With the availability of public water and sewer services and other community facility's Thurmont is in a position to grow in a manner that is consistent with being a Regional Community and yet still retain its small town character.

Since its settling in the 1700's Thurmont has developed with a diversity of land uses including industrial and manufacturing businesses, community oriented commercial uses, highway oriented commercial uses, and a range of residential dwellings from apartments to single family detached units. As is characteristic of most small towns these land uses developed in close proximity to one another which adds to the vitality and character of a small town.

Visions for the State of Maryland

When discussing land use concepts for Thurmont, it bears repeating the visions identified in the Planning Act of 1992 that address the land use concepts supported by the State and this Plan.

- Development is concentrated into suitable areas.
- In rural areas growth is directed into existing population centers and resource areas are protected.

Both of these visions have been addressed in the County's Thurmont Region Plan through the designation of Thurmont as the regional community.

Historic Development Patterns

When Thurmont was first settled, it developed in a very compact manner centered around the intersection of MD 77 and MD 806. For most of its history the Town continued to grow out from the center as roads and water and sewer was extended. By the 1960's the location of new development occurred primarily around the edges of the Town leaving significant areas of vacant land in the middle. This process accelerated in the 1970's and 1980's when most of the new development that occurred was located in newly annexed land which began to form a ring around the vacant properties that have been within the Town for years. The situation has slowed considerably when the Town instituted an annexation moratorium for residential development from 1990 to 1995.

The implications of this scenario continuing are as follows.

- Require extension of roads and water and sewer lines that will require long term maintenance.
- Water and sewer capacity would be used up requiring expansion of the systems when the inner areas do begin developing.
- The compact character of the Town is replaced by needless sprawl.

Currently the Town has approximately 400 acres of vacant land which includes 302 acres that are designated for residential development. The development potential for the residential land is approximately 1,074 dwellings which at an average building rate of 60 dwellings per year would represent a 18-year supply.

Growth Management Strategies

This Plan proposes two primary strategies to manage the amount and rate of growth in Thurmont. Implemented together they should provide Thurmont with a comprehensive approach that should help to maintain Thurmont's small town character and to provide adequate facilities. These strategies include:

- Municipal Growth Boundary
- Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

Municipal Growth Boundary

The 1988 Thurmont Master Plan included an adopted annexation limits which delineated the ultimate expansion of the Town. Expansion to this extent would take place well beyond the 20-year time frame of the master plan. This concept is included in this Draft Plan as well. Some reasons for establishing a growth boundary are as follows.

- To control sprawl.
- To create a rational municipal annexation limit.

- To control utility extensions.
- To protect agricultural land and provide a clear demarcation line between the rural areas and the developed areas.
- To concentrate growth into appropriate areas.

A number of features have been used to aid in the delineation of the growth boundary. Many of these features are shown on the Constraints to Growth map on page 28 and are described below.

Parkland

The western Town boundary adjoins the boundary of Catoclin Mountain Park and is close to the boundary of Cunningham Falls State Park. Also west of Pryor Rd. is the Thurmont watershed property which adjoins the Cunningham Falls State Park.

Graceham

Graceham has been identified as a Rural Community in the Thurmont Region Plan. This community has a very distinctive physical and historical character that should be protected. A community boundary line surrounding Graceham has been identified on the Thurmont Region Plan and extends to the west to Long Rd.

Agricultural land

To the north and east of Thurmont are productive farming operations that should be protected from the encroachment of development. In particular is an Agricultural Preservation District that was created in 1995 and has since sold its development rights to the State which will keep the farm in permanent agriculture use. This farm is located just south of Graceham between Long Rd. and Graceham Rd.

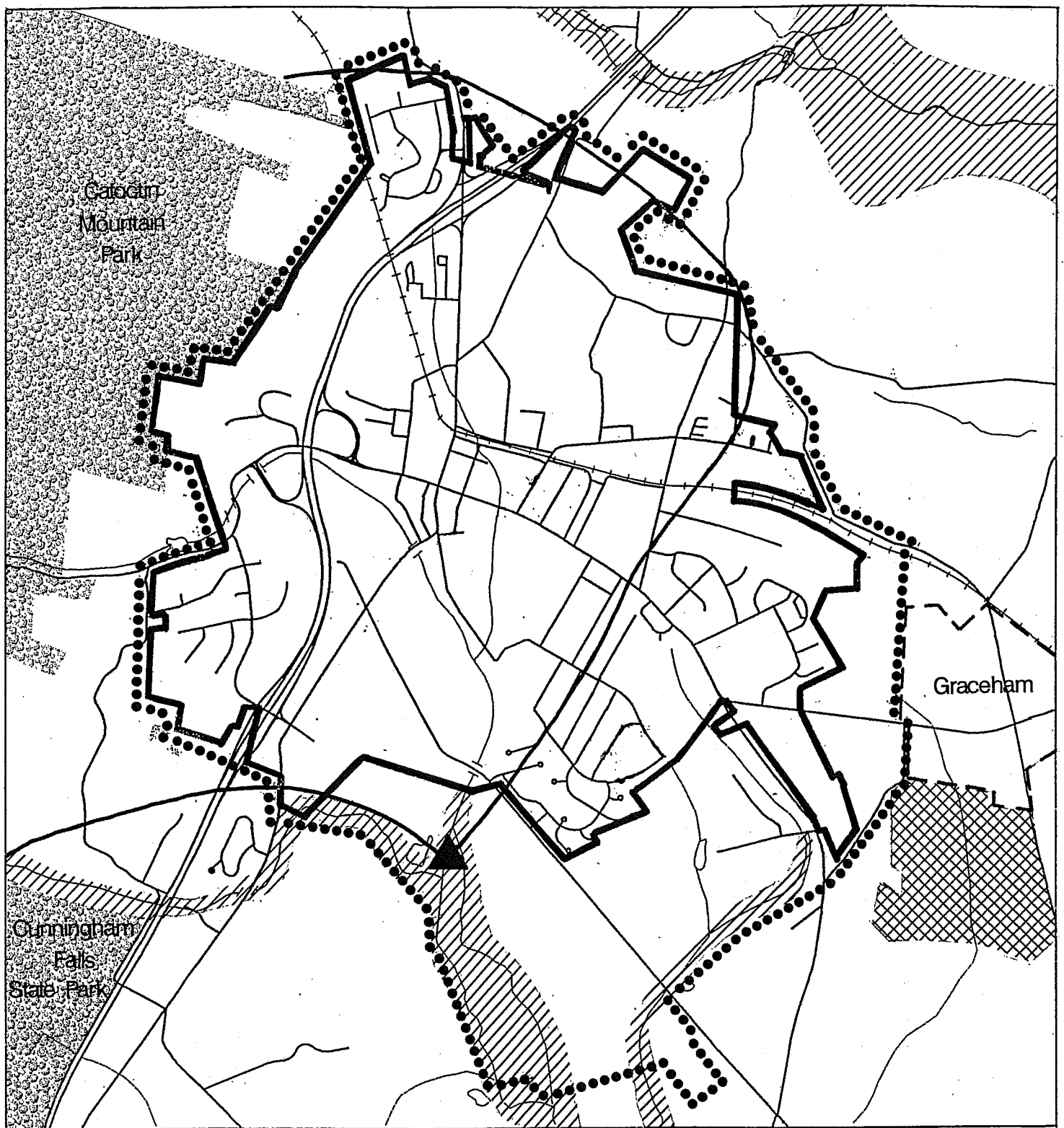
Drainage Basin Boundary

This feature defines the area that would flow by gravity into the Town's sewage treatment plant. Development outside of the drainage basin requires the use of pumping stations which add to the long term maintenance cost of the Town. To maximize the efficiency of the infrastructure as much development as possible should be concentrated within the drainage basin boundary.

Natural Features

Features such as streams, woodlands, and ridges should be used to define community boundaries. Particularly when trying to maintain a clear demarcation between development in the Town and the surrounding agricultural area having a buffer such as a stream with its floodplain and adjoining woodlands can act as a very effective buffer. A tributary of Hunting Creek along the southeast side of Thurmont and High Run along the southern side of Thurmont are proposed to define the growth boundary.

An important aspect of municipal growth boundaries is to allow for some growth to take place and not constrain growth to the point where pressure will be created to expand the boundary on a regular basis. Other communities that have established growth boundaries typically have located them far enough beyond their current boundary to accommodate 20 years of growth. While for some communities a growth boundary is flexible and subject to change, for others it can be regarded as an ultimate limit that should never be expanded. Based on Thurmont's current building rate the recommended MGB could accommodate close to 30 years of growth.



Constraints to Growth

— Drainage Basin Boundary

▲ Sewage Treatment Plant

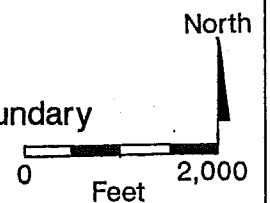
▨ Floodplain - Stream Buffers

▩ Agricultural Preservation District

▨ Park

●●● Municipal Growth Boundary

Thurmont Master Plan



It should be emphasized that the MGB represents the ultimate limits of Thurmont assuming that the infrastructure and community facilities are adequate to handle the development. There would be no obligation by the Town to annex land in this area if facilities were not adequate or sufficient vacant land within the town limits existed. Under these conditions the Town may never expand to the full MGB.

The table below describes the residential development potential of land within the annexation area. The acreage shown is only for land with some development potential and does not reflect the total amount of land that could be annexed.

Table 4
Annexation Area Development Potential

Land Use Designation	Acres (1)	Projected du's (2)	Population Potential (3)
Low Density Residential	217	551	1,394
Medium Density Residential	15	86	218
High Density Residential	16	122	309
TOTAL	248 ac	759 du's	1,921 persons

(1) This is vacant land only, that would have some development potential.

(2) Based on a net developable area of 70% of the total acreage.

(3) Based on 2.53 persons/household.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

In 1996 Thurmont adopted an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) which went into effect on January 1, 1997. The APFO establishes adequacy thresholds for water and sewer, roads, and schools. If a development causes any one of the thresholds to be exceeded then the development could not be approved. Currently, the APFO is applied at the time of site plan or preliminary subdivision plan review. Consideration could be given to applying the APFO at the time of annexation or rezoning instead of waiting until a development plan has been submitted. Continued enforcement of the APFO will ensure a pace of development that is in line with the availability of public facilities.

Land Use Plan Designations

There have been a few changes in the types of designations identified on the land use plan. Several new categories have been included such as institutional and sensitive areas, to better reflect the existing land uses.

Sensitive Areas

As required by the Maryland Planning Act a Sensitive Areas Element must be included within a jurisdiction's master plan. The sensitive areas as defined in the Thurmont Master Plan include 100-year floodplain, stream buffers, and wetlands. The 1988 Master Plan identified these features within the open space category along with parkland.

The zoning of sensitive areas will vary according to the existing zoning on the properties which include sensitive areas. Since these features are regulated through other means, it is not necessary that they be specifically zoned as Open Space.

Public Parkland

This is a new land use designation that was previously included under the open space designation in the 1988 Master Plan. Privately owned parklands such as the Thurmont Little League ballfields are included in this category. All of the Town parks are zoned Open Space while two small parks in residential developments are zoned residential.

Institutional

This is a new designation that encompasses government uses, utilities, schools, and large quasi public uses such as churches and the carnival grounds. These uses are significant enough in size to necessitate being recognized on the land use plan. Uses such as electric substations need to be identified to avoid planning incompatible land uses next to them.

These uses are typically allowed in any zoning district and will not warrant any rezoning as part of the comprehensive rezoning process.

Residential

The first residential development in Thurmont consisted of mostly single-family dwellings on small lots which were mixed with commercial and business uses in the downtown area. Beyond the downtown area residential development occurred along the main streets, MD 77 and MD 550, and along side streets. Since the 1950's residential growth occurred in an irregular pattern with subdivisions being developed along the outskirts of Town and in small clusters with parcels of vacant land remaining.

The densities of the older residential areas range from 5.8 dwellings/acre along W. Main St. to 3.3 dwellings/acre for the area between Carroll St. and Maple Dr. This latter density is fairly representative of single-family development in Thurmont. More recent developments which include townhouses and apartments have densities ranging from 9.4 to 11.8 dwellings/acre. These figures represent the gross densities which include roads, parking, and open space areas.

The type of housing that has been constructed in Thurmont has been predominantly single-family detached. In 1980 the existing housing stock was 68% single-family, 26% apartments, and 6% townhouses/duplexes. Within the 13 subdivisions currently under construction there is a total of 611 units proposed which consist of 67% single-family, 17% townhouses, and 16% apartments/condominiums. The resident survey conducted as part of the Trends and Issues Report indicated a preference for up to 75% single-family units.

Low Density Residential - The R-1 zoning district corresponds to this designation which only allows single-family dwellings with a minimum 12,000 sq. ft. lots. The maximum density would be approximately 3.6 dwellings/acre. The Low Density Residential areas are located primarily around the periphery of Thurmont including the area west of US 15, north of Eyer Rd., and the east side of town outside of the current town limits. The purpose of the Low Density Residential designations in these areas is to provide a transition between the higher density development further within Town and the agricultural and rural residential development adjoining the existing and future town limits.

Medium Density Residential - There are three zoning districts under the medium density designation. The R-2 zone only allows single-family dwellings with a minimum lot size of 8,000 sq. ft. The R-3 zone permits single-family, duplex, and townhouses. A property must have a minimum 50% single-family and a maximum of 25% of the property developed with either duplexes or townhouses. The R-4 zone permits all of these dwelling types with no restrictions on the breakdown of dwelling types. The allowable densities under this designation would range from 5.4 dwellings/acre for the R-2 zone to 10.9 dwellings/acre for the R-4 zone.

The Medium Density Residential designation includes the largest area of vacant land, 157 acres, within the existing town limits with by far the greatest amount of development potential at 706 dwellings.

High Density Residential - The R-5 zoning district corresponds to this designation and allows all types of residential dwellings including apartments and condominiums. The maximum density allowed would be 10.9 dwellings/acre. All of the existing R-5 zoned properties have either been developed or approved for development. The Master Plan identifies one area for high density development. This area is located along the proposed extension of Thurmont Blvd. which is outside the current Town limits. The area between Moser Rd. and the Thurmont Blvd extension should be developed only when access to Thurmont Blvd is provided.

Commercial

The first commercial businesses were developed in the downtown area. As the Town grew, new commercial areas were built beyond the Square Corner along E. Main St., Church St., and Frederick Rd. Most of the businesses in these areas were oriented to the community and the surrounding region. Once US 15 was relocated and widened highway oriented uses were developed at the MD 550/US 15 interchange at the northern end of Town and at the MD 806/US 15 interchange in the southern part of Town.

Presently, Thurmont has two shopping centers, each with a grocery store, for a total of 93,944 sq. ft. of retail space. The resident survey indicated that the most needed types of business are retail uses.

The 1988 Master Plan only included one land use plan designation that encompassed all three commercial zones. For this update the land use plan will identify a land use plan designation to match each of the zoning districts. Currently the Town has three commercial zoning districts: Town Business; General Business; and Highway Business.

Town Business - This zone was established primarily for the downtown area centered around the Square Corner. The B-2 Town Business zone permits a mix of commercial and residential uses

often within the same building which is how many of the buildings were first used. There are no setbacks which would allow any new buildings to be constructed up to the sidewalk in keeping with the existing patterns. The B-2 zone has been applied to properties outside of the downtown area along the Frederick Rd. corridor. It is recommended as part of this Plan and the comprehensive rezoning process that all of the B-2 zoning outside of the downtown area would be rezoned to B-3 General Business. The only exception would be the area at the intersection of E. Main St. and Apples Church Rd. where general business zoning would not be appropriate.

General Business - The B-3 zone is the broadest and most intensive of the three commercial zones in terms of the number and types of uses permitted. The general uses permitted include retail, offices, service commercial, contractor uses, wholesaling, auto related services, and entertainment uses. The commercial area along N. Church St. and Woodside Ave. is zoned B-3. The Frederick Rd. corridor is proposed to be rezoned from B-1 and B-2 to the B-3 zoning district.

Highway Business - The B-1 zone is oriented to highway travelers and thus is restricted to such uses as restaurants, motels, and gas stations. The areas zoned B-1 include the properties around the MD 550/US 15 interchange and properties along Frederick Rd. and on the west side of US 15 at the MD 806 interchange. Due to the restrictive number of uses allowed in this zone many of the vacant parcels may remain vacant if the demand for highway uses is low. To avoid having these properties remain vacant it is recommended that the B-1 zone be abolished and replaced with the B-3 General Business zone which would provide more flexibility in the types of uses that could be developed. The B-3 zone would permit both highway oriented use and community oriented uses.

Industrial

Thurmont has had a long history of industrial uses including having the first match factory in the United States and other uses such as tanneries, a woolen mill, and an edge tool factory. While these businesses are no longer operating, others have taken their place. The construction of the Western Maryland Railroad to Thurmont in 1872 helped in establishing this corridor along the tracks as the Town's industrial area. For a Town of its size and location Thurmont is fortunate to have several large employers including NVR Homes, Moore Business Communication Services, and Structural Systems. Together these three firms employ more than 615 people.

One issue that has been identified with regards to the industrial uses is their location on the eastern side of Town which requires the traffic generated by them to travel through Town in order to access US 15. While there is little that can be done to improve the street network to minimize the impacts of this traffic, it is recommended that any new office/industrial uses be developed in a newly designated area along Thurmont Blvd. which would have direct access to US 15.

Industrial - The I-1 Industrial zone permits office uses, research and development, light manufacturing, warehousing, and all uses permitted in the B-3 General Business zone. This designation would still be focused in the existing areas along the railroad tracks.

Office/Commercial - This is a new designation that is identified along Thurmont Blvd. and would have a greater orientation to office uses and some light manufacturing. A new zoning district would need to be created for this land use designation. Flexibility would be provided by allowing some commercial uses in this zone as well.

Master Plan Development Potential

For the three major land use categories, residential, commercial, and industrial, the development potential for the build out of the Master Plan is described. The build out would include land within the current town limits and land in the proposed annexation area.

Residential

The Plan does not propose any significant departures from the 1988 Master Plan. During the past nine years all of the land designated and zoned for high density residential has either been fully developed or approved plans in place. The Plan proposes one area designated for High Density Residential to meet the needs for multi-family housing. This area is located along the proposed extension of Thurmont Blvd. The proposed annexation area includes a new area for residential that was not designated on the 1988 Master Plan. These properties are located on the south side of Moser Rd. In Table 5 below the development potential for vacant residential land both within the current town limits and in the annexation area is described. Table 6 provides the total residential development potential including existing development, what is currently in the pipeline and the vacant lands designated for residential. The figures in column f identify the total build out of the Master Plan which would take 25 to 30 years to occur.

Table 5
Residential Development Potential

Land Use Designation	Acres Designated (1)	Potential Dwelling Units	Population Potential
Low Density Residential	365	926	2,343
Medium Density Residential	78	326	825
High Density Residential	16	122	309
TOTAL	459 ac	1,374 du's	3,477

(1) Includes only vacant land within the current town limits and vacant land within the annexation area (See Table 4).

Table 6

Master Plan Build out Residential Potential

	a	b	c	d	e	f
	Existing (1)	Pipeline Develop.	Vacant Land	Annex. Area	Total Develop. Potential b + c + d	Total a + e
Acres	688	214	301	244	759 ac	1,447 ac
Dwelling Units	1,961	361	1,074	728	2,163 du's	4,124 du's
Population (2)	4,753	913	2,717	1,843	5,473	10,226

(1) As of January 1, 1997

(2) Based on a household size of 2.53 persons/household

Commercial

The Plan proposes to eliminate the Highway Service zoning district and convert those properties to General Business zoning. Overall the amount of land designated for commercial has decreased from the 1988 Master Plan. Approximately 7 acres located between Thurmont Blvd. and Moser Rd. have been identified as wetlands and is now designated as a sensitive area. A second parcel on the south side of Thurmont Blvd. is proposed to be designated as Commercial/Office. While this new designation would provide more opportunities for office and light industrial uses, it would still accommodate commercial uses. It should be noted that the Town's Industrial zone also permits by right all of the uses allowed in the General Business zone.

Table 7

Commercial Development Potential

Land Use Designation	Acres Designated	Acres Vacant
General Business	64	17
Town Business	41	0
TOTAL	105	17

Industrial

In an effort to provide for more viable office/industrial land, the area along the south side of Thurmont Blvd. has been designated for Office/Commercial. The direct access to US 15 could make this area more attractive for office/industrial uses than the area along Poplar Ave. This

designation would be primarily oriented to office and light industrial uses, but would also permit commercial uses to maximize the flexibility for the properties.

Table 8

Industrial Development Potential

Land Use Designation	Acres Designated	Acres Vacant
Industrial	135	46
Office/Commercial	25	25
TOTAL	160 ac	71 ac

Goals

- To provide for an adequate amount of land to meet a 20 year demand for residential, commercial, and industrial growth.
- To encourage the intergation of compatible land uses in desirable and convenient physical relationships.
- To maintain a rate of growth that will not adversely impact the provision of public services and facilities.
- To encourage the development of vacant land already within the town limits.

Policies

- The Municipal Growth Boundary represents the ultimate (beyond the 20-year Plan) expansion limits of the Town.
- Annexation requests located beyond the MGB shall not be accepted by the Town Board of Commissioners except for properties with existing dwellings that are experiencing well or septic problems.
- A mix of different housing types should be provided to accommodate all income levels.
- Multi-family dwellings (duplexes, townhouses, apartments) should be distributed in small concentration and be integrated with single-family dwellings.
- Compact residential development should be encouraged to maximize the efficient use of the available vacant land which would reduce the need to annex.

- Frontages along the railroad should be reserved for existing and proposed industrial uses.
- The design and aesthetic quality of new development should follow traditional neighborhood design characteristics that would maintain and enhance the small town character of Thurmont.

Transportation

Thurmont has been influenced since its settlement by various aspects of the transportation network from the highways to the railroads. The original settlement of the Town occurred at the crossroads of MD 77 and MD 806. In the late 1800's the Western Maryland Railroad came through town and eventually the H&F Railroad electric trolley. The last major transportation Improvement was the construction of US 15 in the early 1960's, between Frederick and Emmitsburg, which bypassed downtown Thurmont. The dualization of US 15 was completed in 1985.

The Street Network

The street network in Thurmont has developed in a fairly irregular pattern which has been influenced by features such as the railroad tracks, Hunting Creek, and U.S. 15. The older parts of Town, especially along E. Main St., has developed with a grid network extending about one block on either side of Main St. Newer areas especially those developed since the 1950's have an irregular street network.

The key to maintaining uncongested streets is to provide multiple connections which help to spread the traffic out among numerous routes. This keeps individual intersections from being overloaded. While there are a number of different routes for getting around to the different parts of Town there are still a few problem areas. The most often mentioned problem is the Square Corner in downtown. Much of the local traffic must go through this intersection. Another problem area also located in downtown is the intersection of Frederick Rd. and Water St. Traffic generated by the Post Office contributes to the congestion at this intersection. Truck traffic generated by the industrial areas on the east side of Town has also been cited as a problem. Their only access to US 15 is via Main St. or Carroll St., Woodside Ave., and Church St.

Unfortunately, none of the streets or intersections mentioned above could be widened to accommodate additional traffic due to existing buildings located close to the roads. The only viable way to deal with these areas is to provide alternative routes that would bypass the intersections. This may also be difficult due the location of existing development and obstacles such as creeks and wetlands.

A street network is broken down into hierarchy, which is referred to as the functional classification system, which describes how a particular street is used and to a certain extent how the street itself is designed. The function of a street refers to the kind of traffic that is carried whether it is through traffic that comes from areas outside of Thurmont or traffic that is generated in a residential neighborhood and travels to destinations within Thurmont. Function is also determined by the relative levels of traffic and the speed.

Freeway - Freeways provide access on a regional level and for interstate travel. US Rt. 15 is classified as a Freeway on the County's Thurmont Regional Plan. Access is generally provided by grade separated interchanges.

Arterial - These roads provide primarily intra-county access in addition to providing access to the freeway system. The Thurmont Region Plan classifies MD 77, Main St., as a Minor Arterial since it provides access to US 15 from points east and west of Thurmont. Also, classified as Minor Arterial are MD 550 from US 15 west toward Sabillasville and Moser Rd. with a possible connection to Thurmont Blvd. and US 15. The classification of Main St. as an Arterial does not indicate that it would eventually be widened. It merely indicates that Main St. handles through traffic heading to and from US 15 in addition to local traffic.

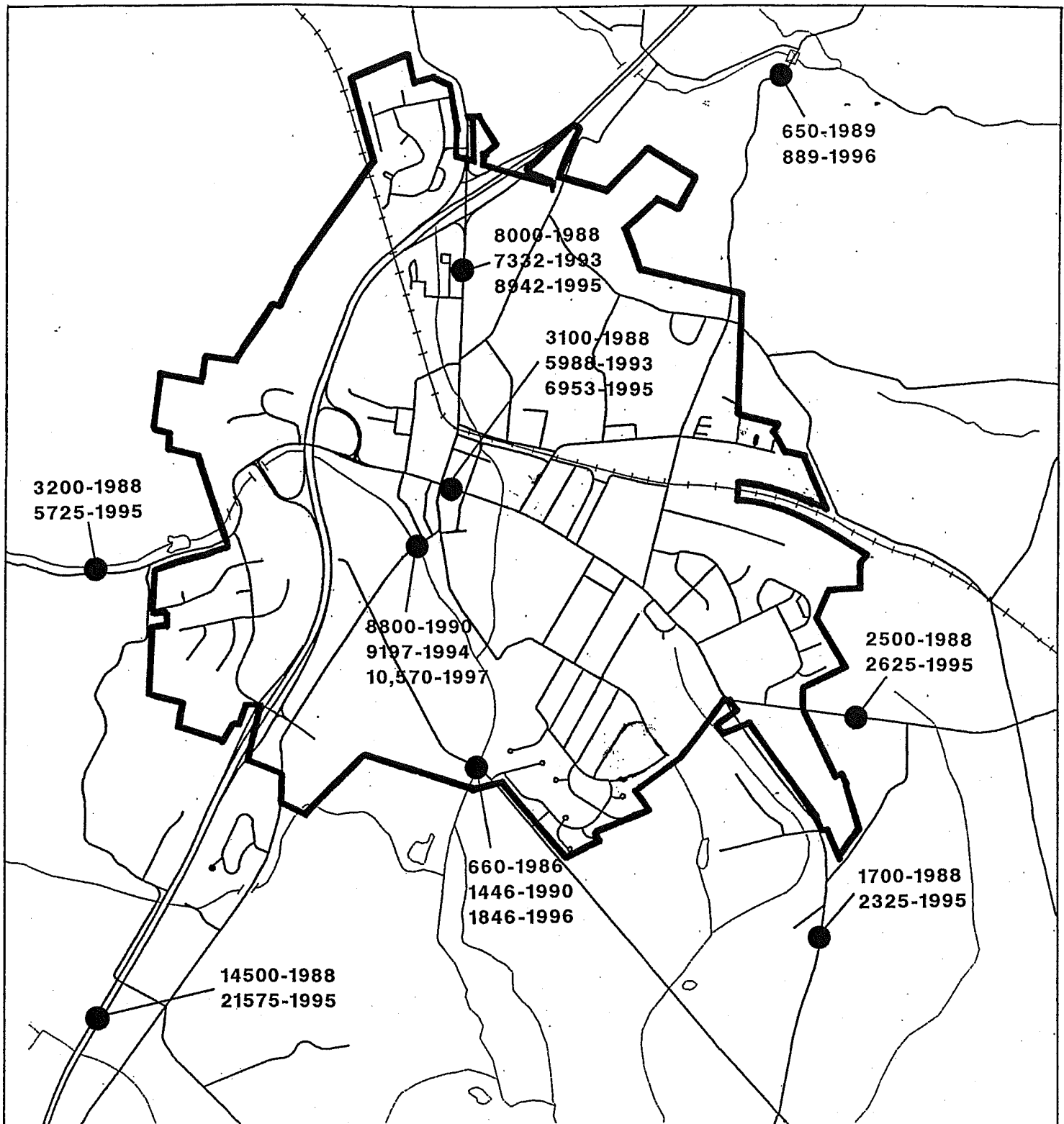
Collectors - As the name implies these types of roads collect traffic generated within neighborhoods via local streets and provides access to an arterial or freeway.

Local - These streets provide the direct access from residential and commercial uses to the collector streets. While local streets cater to low levels of traffic at slow speeds they can provide through access between neighborhoods and the collector streets. The local street network has the greatest potential for providing the interconnections between subdivisions and the collector streets.

Traffic Levels

Traffic levels throughout the Town have increased at varying rates since 1987. The greatest increase has occurred on E. Main St. where traffic rose by 122% from 1987 to 1995 which is an average annual increase of approximately 13%. The most heavily traveled road in Thurmont is Church St., (MD 550), that is carrying approximately 8,900 vehicles per day. However, it should be noted that traffic on Church St. has increased very slowly compared to E. Main St. Since 1987 traffic has only increased by 12% (1,000 vehicles per day), which is just more than 1% per year.

Frederick County has recently completed a Countywide Traffic Study using the MINUTP computer model. The MINUTP model incorporates information on households, population, and employment for a base year of 1995 and a projected year of 2020. The model uses the land use information to determine the number of automobile trips that are generated in a given area and the most likely route that the trips will follow. The traffic levels along with information on the characteristics of the roads themselves are used to develop Level of Service (LOS) data. The LOS give an indication of the relative levels of traffic congestion for segments of a road. The LOS scale ranges from A to F and is described below.

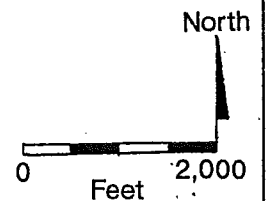


Traffic Counts

*Average Daily Traffic - Year

*Traffic in both directions for an average 24 hour period

Thurmont Master Plan



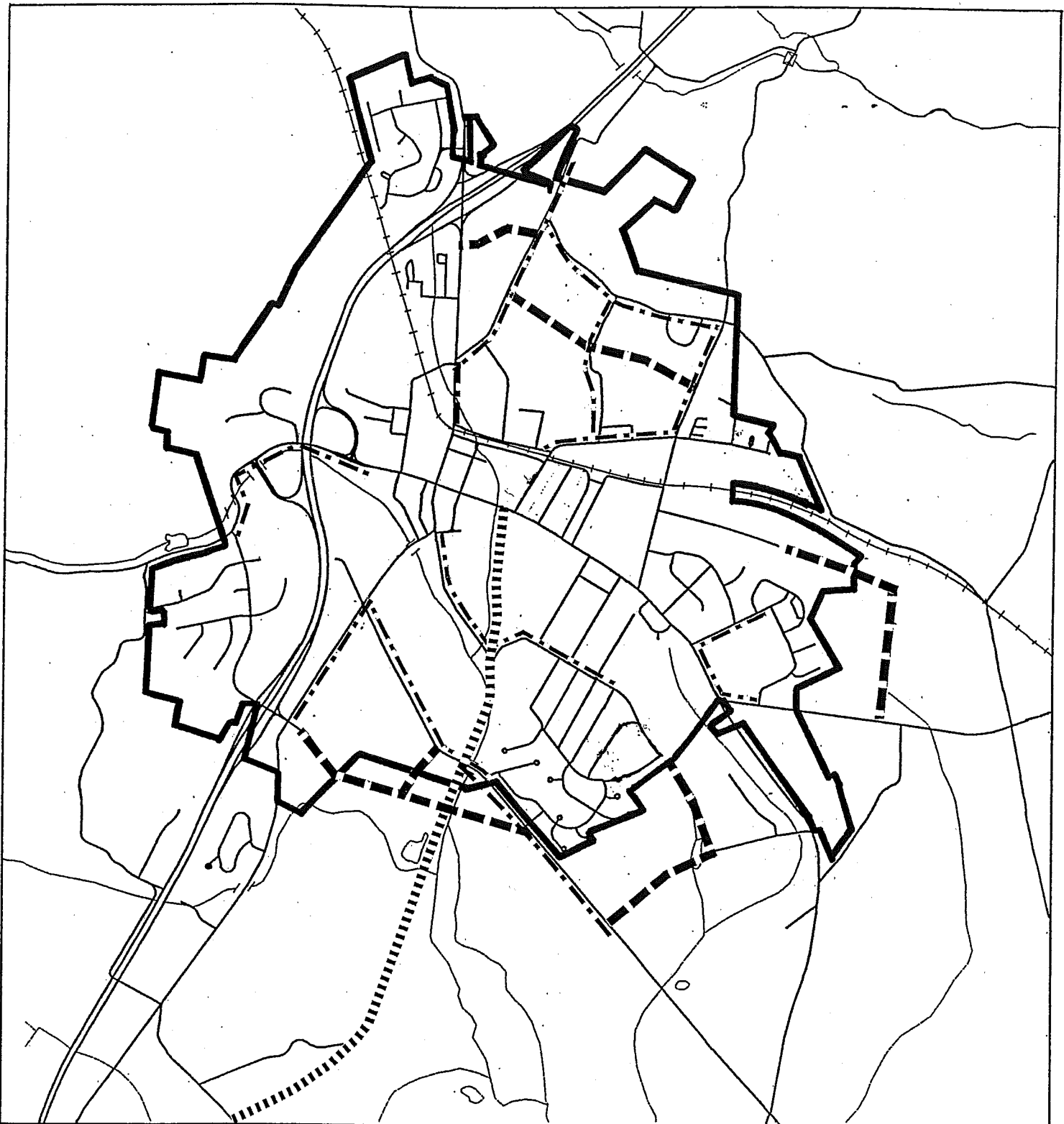
Level of Service	Traffic Characteristics
A	Free flow with minimal delay at intersections
B	Stable flow of traffic with queues developing occasionally at traffic lights. Traffic may have to wait through a red light.
C	Stable flow, typical design level. Occasional delays of more than one red signal.
D	Approaching unstable flow. Substantial delays (waiting through two cycles of the traffic signal) during short periods of the peak hour.
E	Unstable flow. Road or intersection is operating at capacity during entire peak hour. Would include stop and go movements on the highway.
F	Forced flow with jammed intersections causing drivers to wait through more than two cycles of a traffic signal.

The existing road network was used for the 2020 projection to establish a baseline and identify where the congestion problems are likely to occur if road improvements are not made. The roads in Thurmont that were modeled include US 15, MD 77 (Main St.), MD 550 (Church St.), and MD 550 to the southeast of MD 77. The results of the study did not show any road segments in Thurmont with any levels of congestion. This study was not able to model individual intersections which are more likely to be congested than other segments of a road. Additional studies would need to be conducted on specific intersections.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The compact nature of Thurmont makes for easy pedestrian access between residential areas and destinations such as schools, parks, and shopping. There is a real opportunity here to provide an alternative, such as walking and bicycling, to the automobile for short trips within the Town. Several strategies can be used to encourage residents to consider walking or bicycling to work, shopping, or to visit friends.

- New development, especially commercial buildings, should be oriented to the street to provide shorter walking distances. Land uses should be mixed to provide greater opportunities for walking or bicycling between home and shopping etc.
- All new streets should have sidewalks on both sides and existing streets without sidewalks should be retrofitted with walks to provide continuity.
- Develop safe pedestrian crossings at all intersections.
- Integrate pedestrian facilities and development to shorten perceived distance.
- Revise current design standards to increase sidewalk widths to 5 ft. At the very least 5 ft sidewalks should be provided along Collector roads with 4 ft sidewalks along the Local streets.



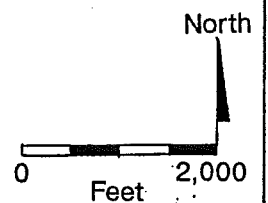
Access Plan

— — — — — Proposed Street Connections

..... H & F Trolley Trail (pedestrian and bicycle path)

- . - . - . Sidewalk/pedestrian Improvements

Thurmont Master Plan



- Provide a minimum 4 ft. wide grass buffer between the sidewalk and the road. This will greatly enhance the safety and comfort for pedestrians especially along heavily traveled roads.

The street network will provide a majority of the pedestrian linkages throughout the Town. Bicycling would be accommodated by sharing the travel lanes with vehicular traffic which should not pose a problem since the roads in Town have low to moderate volumes at relatively slow speeds.

The Town does have an opportunity to develop an off road multi-use trail, which would accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists, along the right-of-way of the abandoned Hagerstown and Frederick Railroad which runs through the middle of Town. Private efforts are underway to develop this trail, to be called the H&F Trolley Trail, between E. Main St. and Moser Rd. Eventually this trail could be extended further south toward Frederick to provide a 17 mile long trail.

Another potential trail corridor is identified along Hunting Creek which could connect the H&F Trail with the Community Park.

Access Plan

The Access Plan identifies new street connections, either local or collector, that should be constructed to develop a fully interconnected street network. These alignments are generalized and are not meant to identify an exact location of the street. The Access Plan also identifies pedestrian corridors that require improvements. These improvements would involve adding new sidewalks along streets that currently do not have them or reconstructing sidewalks to provide wider sidewalks with a buffer strip. The State Highway Administration administers a Sidewalk Retrofit Program that provides funding for new sidewalks along State highways which would include Main St., Church St., and Emmitsburg Rd..

The proposed H & F Trolley Trail would follow the right of way of the Hagerstown and Frederick Railroad which is owned by the Town of Thurmont. A link from this trail along Hunting Creek to the Community Park is also proposed.

Other Transportation Modes

The Maryland Midland Railroad currently owns the old Western Maryland tracks that run through Thurmont and connect with Baltimore to the east and Highfield Pennsylvania to the west. Maryland Midland operates regular freight service along the line serving NVR Homes and the Thurmont Coop in Thurmont.

Frederick County operates TransIT which provides shuttle service between Thurmont, Emmitsburg and Frederick during the morning and afternoon. There is also a midday shuttle two days per week. There are three stops in Thurmont at: the Thurmont Plaza shopping center; downtown by the American Legion; and at the Mountaingate Plaza. The shuttle connects with the three TransIT routes that operate within Frederick City.

Goals

- To coordinate street and pedestrian improvements with land use proposals.
- Provide a pedestrian environment that is safe, comfortable, and convenient.
- To improve pedestrian access along the existing street network to provide connections between residential areas and schools, parks, and businesses.
- Provide new street connections to improve accessibility throughout the town.
- Develop the H&F Trolley Trail through the town.

Policies

- Require through streets in new development that would provide connections between individual developments and existing streets.
- New development will provide new sidewalks along all new or existing streets that have frontages along the development.
- Encourage the use of traditional neighborhood design that could improve pedestrian accessibility.
- Encourage development densities that would support transit usage.

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Community Facilities

The provision of public services and facilities in conjunction with new development is an important part of growth management. Thurmont has taken a significant step regarding this through the adoption of an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), which went into effect on January 1, 1996. The APFO requires new residential, commercial, and industrial developments to be tested against the adequacy of streets, schools and water and sewer. If any of the facilities exceed the threshold identified in the ordinance, then the proposed development would be denied preliminary subdivision or site plan approval.

Implementation of a land use concept that concentrates growth in vacant areas already within Town as opposed to allowing development to spread out around the perimeter of Town reduces the need for extensive expansion of community facilities. The length of new water and sewer lines, streets and other utilities can be minimized by concentrating development. This can reduce the Town's maintenance costs substantially.

Schools

The APFO will have the greatest impact on new residential developments since Thurmont Elementary exceeds the threshold of 105% of capacity.

Table 9 shows the projected school enrollments through 2004. The projected overcrowding in these figures is higher than previous years' projections. To address this situation, there are three projects in the County's Approved FY1998-2003 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) which are described below.

Catoctin Area Elementary

New 466 student school to be located in the northern part of the town. Proposed to open 2001.

Thurmont Middle

Addition to accommodate 185 additional students with 9,500 sq.ft. of new space and renovation of 15,000 sq.ft. of existing space. Proposed to open 2000.

Catoctin High

Addition of one classroom and core area to increase capacity by 322 students. An addition to the gym will increase capacity by 45 students. Proposed to open 1999.

Table 9

School Enrollment Projections

Year
Percentage of Capacity

	Cap	1997*	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Thurmont Elem.	586	127%	134	139	144	146	147	148	150	152	153
Thurmont Middle	715	88%	88	86	90	96	97	99	102	114	109
Catoctin High	833	106%	108	103	110	118	119	120	130	133	139

Source: BOE, July 1997

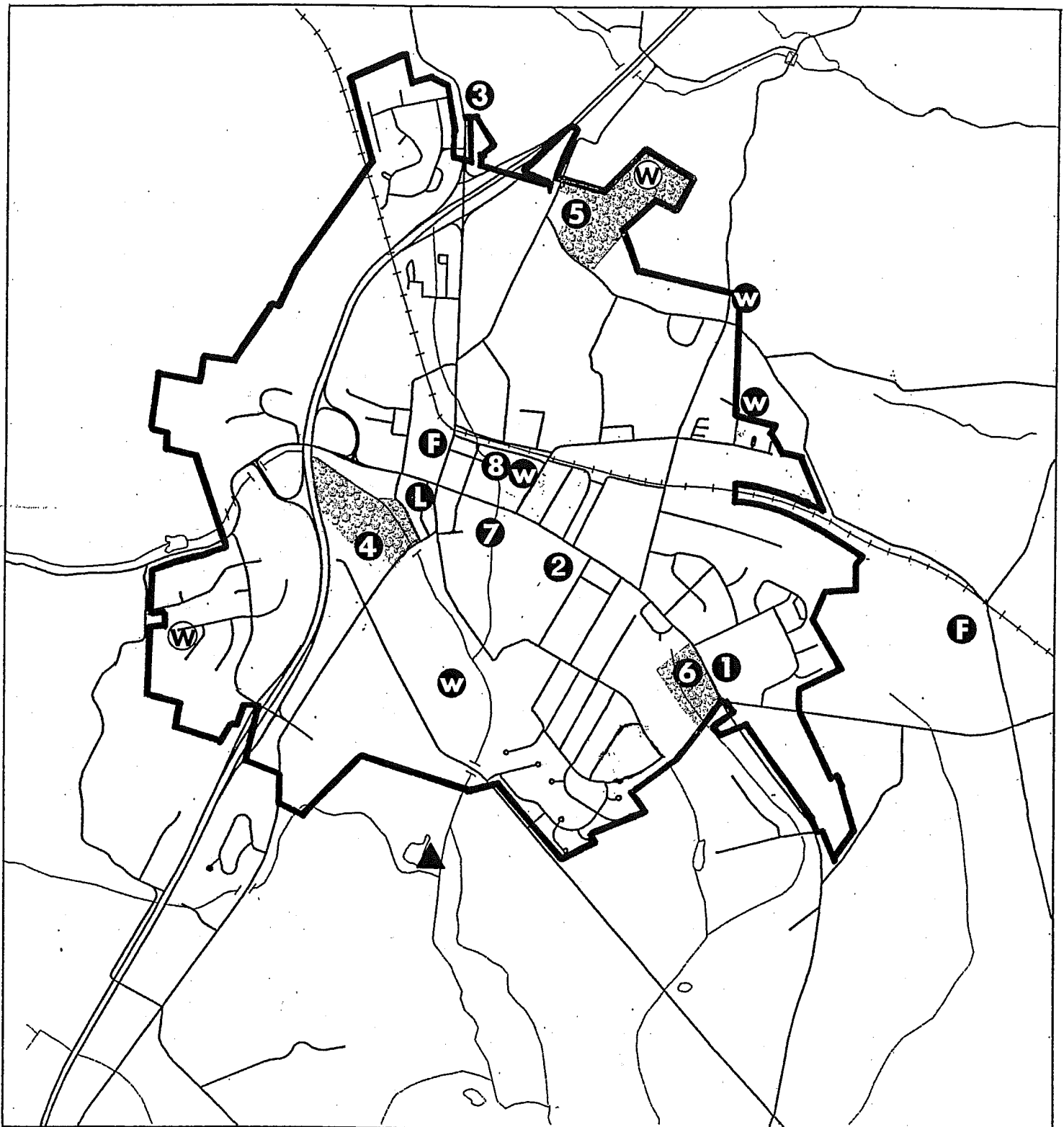
*Actual enrollments as of September 30, 1997

Parks and Recreation

Thurmont has a total of 73 acres of public park land, most of which is developed for active recreational use. Three small neighborhood parks have been identified in the Orchard Hills, Woodland Park, and Albert Courts developments but have not yet been developed. Though privately owned, the Thurmont Little League ball fields, adjacent to the East End Recreation Area, are available for use by Thurmont organized teams. In addition to the Town facilities are playing fields located at the three public schools. The schools provide an additional 30 acres which accommodate softball, baseball, and football fields and tennis and basketball courts.

The greatest need for parks will be for neighborhood parks that are 1-2 acres in size and are located in the middle of residential neighborhoods. These parks would provide informal playing fields for small children living within walking distance of the park and would also serve as a focal point for the neighborhoods. The need for additional ballfields should be met by making greater use of the fields at the three local schools which would more than double the number of fields available in the community.

A new facility proposed in Thurmont is the H&F Trolley Trail which will be located along the old railroad alignment between E. Main St. and Moser Rd. This multi use trail will accommodate walkers, runners, bicyclists, and during the winter cross country skiers. This trail has the potential to extend beyond the Town to Catoctin Furnace and perhaps all the way to Frederick.



Existing Community Facilities

- 1** Thurmont Elementary
- 2** Thurmont Middle
- 3** Catoctin High
- 4** Community Park

- 5** Eyler Road Recreation Area
- 6** East End Recreation Area
- 7** Memorial Park
- 8** Thurmont Playground

- F** -Fire Station
- L** -Library
- ▲** -Sewage Treatment Plant
- W** -Water Tank
- w** -Well

North



Thurmont Master Plan

0 2,000
Feet

Table 10

Thurmont Municipal Parks

Park	Acres	Facilities
Eyler Road Recreation Area	32	baseball (1), soccer (1), ice skating
Community Park	23	softball (1), tennis (2), basketball (4), playground
East End Recreation Area	14	softball (5), soccer (1), tennis (2), playground
Memorial Park	2	
Thurmont Playground	2	playground, picnicing

Water & Sewer

The capacity of the Town's sewage treatment plant will be the critical facility in determining the amount of new development that can be accommodated. The plant has a design capacity of one million gallons per day (gpd) with current usage at approximately 800,000 gpd. The sewage system suffers from an inflow and infiltration problem that uses up capacity that could serve new development. This problem involves water that leaks into the system through cracks in the pipes and through manhole covers in the street. The treatment plant will require additional capacity to accommodate even the build out of vacant land within the current Town limits.

Thurmont's water system consists of 42 miles of distribution pipes supplied by four wells. The Town does have two reservoirs located off of Pryor Rd. The larger one has a capacity of 2.5 million gallons and is fed by High Run and several springs and is available for emergency use only. The second reservoir has been converted into a 180,000 gallon storage tank which is fed by wells. The four wells can produce an average of 850,000 gallons per day while average daily consumption has been approximately 403,000 gallons per day. A fifth well (#8) will be put into operation in 1998 and will have a maximum yield of 220,000 gallons per day and an average yield of 165,000 gpd. The total daily yield from all of the wells will be approximately 1,015,000 gpd. The water system also includes two storage tanks which have a total capacity of 200,000 gallons.

In Table 11 below the existing conditions for the water and sewer systems are shown. Also identified is the development potential that could be accommodated with the available capacity. The table shows that the sewer system will need to be increased by 323,000 gpd (see column c) just to handle the build out of vacant land within the current town limits. The water system will still have approximately 110,000 gpd of capacity to accommodate annexations. Additional capacity in both systems would be needed to handle commercial and industrial development which is difficult to project due to the variety of uses that could be developed with varying sewer and water needs. Column g shows that the build out of the Master Plan, which would add 2,194 dwellings, would

require an additional 589,000 gallons/day of sewerage capacity and 156,000 gallons/day of water capacity. It is important to note that this build out would take 30 years or more to take place.

Table 11

Water & Sewer Availability and Needs
000's gallons/day

	a Existing Design Capacity	b Current Daily Usage	c Current Available Capacity	d Development Potential (1) based on c	e Development Potential (2) capacity (3) available or (deficit)	f Annexation Potential capacity needed	g Total Potential (e&f) Total capacity (Deficit)
Sewer	1,000	800	179	511 du's	<u>1,435 du's</u> (323)	<u>759 du's</u> 266	<u>2,194 du's</u> (589)
Water	1,015	403	612	1,750 du's	<u>1,435 du's</u> 110	<u>759 du's</u> 266	<u>2,194 du's</u> (156)

(1) Number of dwelling units based on usage of 350 gallons/day/dwelling. This number would be lower to account for potential commercial and industrial development.

(2) Includes potential in residential pipeline, 361 dwelling units, and the potential for vacant land within the existing town limits, 1,074 dwelling units.

(3) Based on the build out of vacant land in town, 1,435 dwelling units, there would be a surplus of 110,000 gpd of water capacity and a deficit of 323,000 gpd of sewer capacity.

Library

The Thurmont Branch is located in downtown Thurmont on Water Street and serves Thurmont and surrounding areas. Another branch is located in Emmitsburg. The Thurmont Branch has 2,100 sq.ft. in floor area and can seat about 45 people. Circulation in 1990 was 36,602. The 1990 Countywide Comprehensive Plan recommends that an evaluation of the long term needs of the Thurmont Branch be undertaken. The local library board is in the process of identifying a site for a new library building.

Police/Fire

Thurmont has its own police force which includes six patrol officers and the chief. The County Sheriff's Department and the State Police also provide assistance. Fire and rescue service is provided by the Guardian Hose Company and the Thurmont Ambulance Company, both of which are located on North Church Street in downtown. In 1989, the Ambulance Company constructed a new four-bay facility which houses an Advanced Life Support Unit which serves the northern part of the County. The Thurmont area is also served by the Graceham Fire Company, located just east of Town.

Goals

- Provide adequate community facilities in conjunction with new development.
- Provide additional neighborhood park sites
- Protect the groundwater recharge areas around the Town's wells.
- Support the location of a new library in the downtown area.
- Maximize the efficiency of the Town's existing facilities.

Policies

- Focus new development into vacant land already within the Town limits.
- Continue enforcement of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).
- Require dedication of neighborhood parks as part of new residential developments.
- Discourage development that may have adverse impacts on groundwater.
- Coordinate efforts to identify a new location for the library.

Implementation

This chapter provides recommendations that should be carried out by the Town in order to fully implement the goals and policies identified in this Master Plan. There are three basic elements that a Master Plan seeks to address through its statement of goals, policies, and with its land use map. These elements include the type and location of land use/development; the density and scale of the development; and the timing of when the development is allowed to take place. This last element is particularly tied to the provision of adequate public facilities.

The three tools used by the Town to guide new development include the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance describes the types of zoning districts, residential, commercial, and industrial, and identifies the specific types of uses permitted in the districts. This ordinance also stipulates the minimum lot sizes that can be created, the setbacks of buildings from the property lines, and building heights. For commercial uses off street parking and signage is also regulated.

Historically, zoning ordinances have been rather rigid by restricting zoning districts to only one type of use such as allowing only single family detached units in residential districts and not permitting a mix of commercial and residential uses in the same district. This has resulted in a segregation of uses which runs counter to the historical development of small towns which involved mixing different uses in the same block. The rigidity of the zoning ordinance has also resulted in a suburban look to parts of town that is not consistent with the small town character that the residents want to maintain.

The recommendations described below are oriented to providing greater flexibility in the zoning ordinance in an effort to maintain and enhance the small town character of Thurmont.

Recommendations

A commercial/office zoning district should be established to provide maximum flexibility for properties. This zone would correspond with the new commercial/office land use designation that is recommended for the Thurmont Blvd area.

A residential zone or overlay should be established to promote and encourage the use of

traditional town design standards including a mix of dwelling types and reduced setbacks from the street. The application of these standards could either be accomplished with a new zoning district that would require rezoning or with an overlay zone that could be applied over existing residential zoning districts.

The B-1 Highway Service zoning district should be eliminated. Vacant land zoned B-1 should be rezoned to B-3 General Business to provide maximum flexibility for the development of the properties.

Allow for second story residential use in the B-3 General Business district.

Provide incentives for developers, such as density bonuses, to use traditional neighborhood design elements in their projects.

Subdivision Regulations

The Subdivision Regulations provides the process by which properties are subdivided into separate lots for development. These regulations also provide guidelines and standards for street design and the layout of lots for residential subdivisions.

Recommendations

Revise the street design standards to reflect the move toward narrower streets which follows the traditional neighborhood design characteristics. The standards should provide for a range of widths depending on the expected level of traffic and the need for on-street parking.

Update the ordinance to reflect current procedures and to streamline the process as necessary.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

The third tool used by the Town is the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) which was adopted by the Town in October 1995. The APFO, which was modeled after the County's ordinance, establishes thresholds for schools, roads, water, and sewer facilities which are used to determine if there is adequate capacity to serve a proposed development. If a threshold on any one of the facilities is exceeded and the developer is not able to make improvements then the development would not be approved. The APFO is a very strong tool to regulate the timing of new development over the course of the 20 year time frame covered by the Master Plan.

Recommendations

The APFO should be revised as necessary to remain consistent with the County's APFO.

Comprehensive Rezoning

After the current Master Plan was adopted in 1988 the Town undertook a comprehensive rezoning

to correct mapping errors and allow the Town to initiate changes in zoning which would be consistent with the land use plan.

For this update the comprehensive rezoning is being conducted at the same time as the plan update. During the early part of the process individual property owners were given the opportunity to submit requests for changes in either the land use designation and/or the zoning on their property. In addition the Town will be able to initiate changes in zoning to address recommended revisions to the zoning districts described earlier.

The most extensive change being recommended involves the elimination of the B-1 zoning district. It is proposed that all properties currently zoned B-1 be rezoned to B-3 General Business. Over the years many properties along Frederick Rd. were rezoned to B-2 Town Business which was created for the downtown business area. It is recommended that all of the properties zoned B-2 along Frederick Rd. be rezoned to B-3 which is more appropriate for the area.

Annexation

Thurmont has for the past 10-15 years grown more around the edges on newly annexed property than on vacant land already within the town limits. The Town instituted a moratorium on residential annexations from 1990 to 1995 in an effort to focus new development inward rather than continuing to annex more land.

The Municipal Growth Boundary (MGB) which was first identified on the 1988 Master Plan as the annexation limits. The MGB identifies the maximum limits for annexation by the Town. This is the ultimate limit which goes beyond the 20 year time frame of this Master Plan. The adopted MGB should be identified in future updates of the County's Thurmont Region Plan.